



Gwen Allard Inducted to Hall of Fame

By Mark Aiken

There is no such thing as ‘I can’t,’ says Gwen Allard, longtime ski instructor, an early supporter of adaptive teaching, and the very first PSIA Eastern region executive director. “There is always a way.” Congratulations to Gwen on her induction into the United States Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame.

Gwen Allard

The determination that characterized Gwen’s 50-plus-year ski instructing career is the reason she will be enshrined in the Hall in March.

“It is the honor of my life,” she says, reflecting on joining the likes of Picabo Street, Glen Plake, Stu Campbell, and other legendary racers, Olympians, ground-breakers, and snowsports pioneers and icons. “Everyone will be asking, ‘Who the heck is Gwen Allard?’”

Those sentiments are not entirely inaccurate; Gwen has influenced thousands of instructors and students. Gwen has taught at numerous resorts: Maple Ski Ridge, NY, Gore Mountain, NY, Ski Roundtop, VT, Windham Mountain, NY, Okemo, VT, Killington, VT, and Double H Ranch, NY. Her many accomplishments include being the very first executive director of the PSIA Eastern region, founding and leading the PSIA-E Education Foundation, founding and directing the Adaptive Sports Foundation at Windham Mountain, NY (where she still serves on the board), helping PSIA adopt Adaptive as a discipline and serving as the first chair of the PSIA National Adaptive Committee, and authoring adaptive manuals for PSIA-AASI. This is a partial list, but you get the idea that it is filled with firsts and leans towards helping those with disabilities. “The fact that she pushed any of us with disabilities to take on the challenges of which in many cases was uncharted territory is a testament to her vision,” says PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team Coach Geoff Krill.

A Skiing Pioneer

“I started instructing at a time when girls didn’t ski instruct,” says Gwen. “Girls became nurses and teachers.” Everyone needs a mentor – including legendary ski pioneers. “Freddie got me started,” says Gwen, referring to Frederica Anderson, longtime ski school director of New York’s Schenectady Ski School at Maple Ski Ridge. “The whole thing sort of spiraled out of control after that.”

Gwen simply never gives up; she’ll never admit defeat. “I certainly didn’t know anything,” she says. “I was always looking for information, especially when it came to teaching sick or injured people.” Adaptive instruction would not be what it is today without Gwen. Faced with challenges, Gwen asked questions, did research, and made phone calls. She left no stone unturned in her quest for solutions. “I’d visit hospitals, call doctors, and ask questions about prosthetics,” she says. “Medicine doesn’t sit still. When you can add a tidbit or change a detail that could result in getting someone on a pair of skis, well, you do it.

Gwen applauds PSIA-AASI for its recent emphasis on the various skills involved in instructing. “Some of the equipment we can use has changed,” she says. “But the movements in skiing are the same. It’s great to recognize that,” she says.

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PSIA-AASI E Area Rep Program Recognizes Long-time Serving Area Reps

By Joan Heaton

Area Rep Program Coordinator

The PSIA-AASI E Area Rep Program proudly recognizes its long-time serving Area Reps.

For 10 consecutive years, the Area Reps listed below served in our program by disseminating information from the PSIA-AASI Eastern Region office to their fellow snowsports instructors in a most expedient and accurate way. Their presence at their area enabled them to field questions and concerns from their staff members in a timely and accessible manner. During and at the end of each season, these Reps submitted questions, ideas, and suggestions received from fellow instructors to the Coordinator of the Program who, in turn, presented a summary of that information to the organization’s leaders.

It is a pleasure to present the Program’s 10-year Area Rep Program Long-time Service Award to the following Area Reps for their loyal and dedicated service in our program.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Thomas Alcorn | Vermont Adaptive at Pico |
| Andy Bertisch | Windham Mountain Snowsports School |
| Sandra Bohling | Ober Gatlinburg Snowsports School |
| Mike Cavallaro | Ski Club of Washington DC Ski School |
| Terry Carey | Okemo Ski & Ride School |
| Tim Carey | Willard Mountain Ski & Snowboard School |
| Milo Fischer | Sugarbush Ski & Ride School |
| Jeff Kulhawy | Spring Mountain Ski & Snowboard School |
| Horst Locher | Bryce Resort Learning Center |
| Mark Taylor | Blue Knob Snowsports School |

The 10-year long-time service certificates will be presented to the Area Reps at the Snowsports School Management Seminar at Mount Snow on November 28, 2022 and at Pro Jam at Killington on December 15, 2022.

At the present time, 131 Area Reps are serving our Eastern Region as dedicated liaisons to our Snowsports Schools. They serve as valuable lines of communication between the membership and the PSIA-AASI Eastern Region office in Albany. They provide ‘grassroots’ input from their schools for our Eastern leaders. The Reps also serve as willing helpers for local PSIA-AASI Eastern Region events and projects.

As a PSIA-AASI Eastern member, you can check with your Snowsports School Directors to be sure your school is represented in the Area Rep Program. If your school might not have an Area Rep, please speak with your director. Your Snowsports School Area Rep could be YOU! **««**

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view from the chair

PETER HOWARD

Boad Chair Report



Greetings members of the Eastern Region of PSIA-AASI. The summer and early fall have been busier than you might think a snow sports organization would be in the off season. This letter is a

potpourri of the activities and programs initiated by your Eastern Region and the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is planning ways to be increasingly available to you, the membership. We realize that reducing what were previously the 7 Eastern Regions to 4 Eastern Zones has reduced or eliminated access to Board Members. And Covid also caused a reduction in Membership Meetings in various parts of the East. The plans for the Board to be more available to you are being developed by the Membership Communication Committee, which is composed of more than half the current Board members. The goal is that Members who might like to speak to and hear from their Board of Directors can do this with regularity and without difficulty.

While this is not a direct Board initiative, online education is certainly supported by your Board. Online education opportunities now range from Nationally produced webinars to less formal "tea talks" and other opportunities in between. There are webinars focusing on different disciplines and different levels of experience. Some provide education credits and some have no cost. Recently

your Eastern Region has named an Education Committee which is in the process of providing online opportunities to listen to and interact with very experienced snow sports teachers.

A few seasons ago the Board of Directors was concerned about the monitoring and evaluation of the Education Staff. That concern is being addressed this season in a much more structured manner than ever before. Among other things, it will provide a pathway to advancement within the Education Staff, compensation equity between the different disciplines (Snowboard, Nordic, Adaptive, and Alpine) and performance monitoring. I suspect our CEO Kathy Brennan may write more on this subject elsewhere in the *Snow Pro*.

Speaking of the CEO, the Board of Directors has a monitoring schedule that tracks CEO and organizational performance through the fiscal year. At the Board Meeting this fall, the CEO will report on asset protection and fiscal status/plan.

Your Eastern Board of Directors schedules time for a couple hours of education at most of our meetings. We do this to properly serve the membership. This fall's Board Member education will focus on the legal obligations and responsibilities of being a Board member.

I realize that the inner workings of an organization are extremely dull compared to flying around in the snow. Zoom calls, Bylaws, and being a desk jockey seems to deaden the soul. Soon we will all have our wings back and that will be an exciting day because a soul is meant to fly. Help your customers know what you know and do what you do. I hope to see you on the snow and wish you all a healthy happy snow sports season. ☺

Peter Howard

Eastern Board Chair



Looking for an event?

Check out the schedule at:

<https://www.psia-e.org/ev/schedule>

Check in periodically for changes and additions.

I'd rather be on snow

Report from the Board

By Ty Johnson

Eastern Board Member

Winter is coming. Let's hope it's cold and snowy in the south this year! Don Haringa and Melissa Skinner have set up a tremendous event schedule for us in Region 7 / Zone 4 this year. Kathy Brennan's listening tour into the south last year had a major effect on getting feedback from you all and she listens! We have all kinds of events in the South – Level I Assessments (Exams), Children's Specialist 1 and 2 events, Level II and III Assessment Prep clinics for both snowboard and alpine as well as Level II Assessments.

After a couple years of Covid and the difficulty of being able to meet in person, we have a full schedule of events that are coming to the south, which is awesome for those of us living in this area. From Cataloochee to Wisp, there are events all through the month of January and February and even into March!

On the Alpine level II Path, there are two assessment prep clinics – one is at Massanutten and the other is at Cataloochee. There are also three Alpine Level II Assessments (exams) – one at Beech Mountain, one at Snowshoe and one at Wisp.

For members interested in improving their skills teaching snowsports to children, there are two Children Specialist 1 (CS1) events at Ober Gatlinburg and Massanutten and one Children's Specialist 2 (CS2) event at Snowshoe!

On the AASI side there are several Snowboard events in the south this year at Snowshoe. There are Snowboard level II and III prep clinics at Snowshoe and also a Level II Assessment. There is even an Over 40 snowboarding event at the Shoe!

One special event I would really like to see populated would be the Alpine Eastern Trainer Academy at Wintergreen in early February. A few years ago at Timberline, we hosted an Eastern Trainer Academy. – It was the first one in the south and we had three groups of trainers. Out of that Academy, came our region's only two Examiner Training Squad members (Chip Coxe and Eric Anderson). I would love to see two trainers from every major resort in the south attend that event, so we can meet and talk about how to help more members from the south reach the education staff and have fun doing it. We in the south have got to take care of ourselves as much as possible because it's as hard for the BOE (Examiners) to come so far south as it is hard for us to go so far north for certain events. The more we can train our trainers, the better off we will be. So, all level II and level III alpiners who are or want to be trainers should think about coming to this event. We need to identify teaching and skiing/riding talent, develop it and keep it in the south, so we have more opportunity to improve all our instructors as skiers and snowboarders. I will be reaching out to directors and managers with more information to help push this along.

There are also several Adaptive events in the south as well as a Telemark Southern Nordic Hoedown at Timberline in West Virginia – check that out.

This upcoming season has the best event schedule I think I have seen for the south in many years – maybe the best ever! Let us make sure that we populate these events so that we can continue to get these events to come below the Mason Dixon line! Let's hope for cold and snowy weather; see you on the slopes! ☺☺

Ty Johnson

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snowsports school management

Snowsports Management Seminar Update

By Gail Setlock

PSIA-E Examiner

SMS Committee Chair

It's time again for the annual Snowsports Management Seminar! This year we have an exciting lineup of both indoor and outdoor sessions to help develop and inspire your leadership skills as a Snowsports manager/supervisor.

Our Keynote speaker will be Eric Lipton who will talk about changes in the Snowsports School business. We adapted to changes in the way we ran our schools during the Covid pandemic. And now many of those changes are here to stay. Eric will talk about embracing change and meeting guest needs.

Also exciting this year is our newly selected Snowsports Management Committee – a team of 11 Snowsports Directors or Supervisors representing various Snowsports Schools throughout the Eastern Region. Director of Education & Programs Don Haringa and I have had the pleasure to work with this new committee this summer. The committee discussed ideas for sessions that would be informative and beneficial for those attending the seminar.

Our committee members are:

Mark Absalom – Big Bear, PA

Dave Beckwith – Killington, VT

Ross Boisvert – McIntyre, NY

Joey Carey – Sugarbush, VT

Lisa Dutto – Waterville Valley, NH

Greg Fatigate – Smugglers Notch, VT

Dan Hogan- Windham, NY

Joe Hurley – Bart Adaptive, VT

Thom Norton – Wachusett, MA

Megan Withrow – Timberline, WV

Mike Yocum – Liberty, PA

Sessions being offered at this year's seminar include the ever-popular Movement Assessment, Risk Management Awareness, reviewing and understanding the new Performance Standards, the importance of People skills, the Learning Connection model, children-specific sessions, and more.

In addition to indoor and outdoor sessions, we'll have a Sponsor Showcase for you to meet some of our sponsors during the cocktail party. We will also have the annual banquet dinner.

On the National PSIA/AASI Snowsports Directors front there will be 3 webinar offerings this Fall as part of the Directors track. These sessions include integrating certification assessment tools into your everyday training, strategies for developing women to be leaders at your mountain, and succession-planning for future leadership in your Snowsports School. Check out the National website for details.

I look forward to seeing Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Trainers at our annual seminar, Nov 28-30, 2022. ☺☺

kb's corner

By Kathy Brennan
Eastern Division CEO

While you have been enjoying the beautiful summer weather in the northeast, the PSIA-AASI Eastern Region staff has been busy, busy, busy getting ready for the 22-23 season. There are a couple of exciting changes we want to share with you, including: under 16 may get certified, Alpine Level 1 prep, new Eastern committees, outcomes from our Spring Leadership Meeting, and other good news from our region.



Certifying 14- & 15-Year Olds

First up, certifying instructors under 16 years of age. If you are 14 and 15 years old and are teaching for a resort, we want to support you in your goals to become certified. New this year, if you can teach, you are welcome to become certified. We recognize that in some states in our region, and at some resorts, people cannot become instructors until they are 16 years of age, or even 18 at some resorts; however, if you work at a resort that employs 14- and 15-year-olds, we want to support you. We have eliminated the requirement to be 16 years of age to become certified. Please note, with the introduction of the Learning Connection Model and the Unified Assessment form, the Level 1 Assessment is even more comprehensive, and not everyone passes. Be sure you are well prepared. Read the Eastern Assessment Guide for your discipline (<https://psia-e.org/ed/>), review the National Certification Standards, Unified Assessment Form, and Performance Guides on the national website at: <https://www.thesnowpros.org/certification/national-certification-standards/>. Also remember, as a member you get free digital access to the *Teaching Snowsports* manual, your discipline's *Technical* manual, and the new *Teaching Children Snowsports* manual. You may access those, along with plenty of other resources, on the national website.

Alpine Level 1 Prep Webinar

Speaking of being prepared, also new this year, we are offering an Alpine Level 1 prep webinar. Are you unsure of the format of the Alpine Level 1 assessment, how much information you need to know, or the required skill levels? Do you have questions and no one to turn to at your local hill? On the third Wednesday of every month, we will be offering a two-hour webinar designed to help you to be more comfortable with the Alpine Level 1

assessment. This session will explain the format, offer background information about our organization, review the Learning Connection Model, and provide ample opportunities for questions. If you are concerned about your Alpine assessment, don't miss this session. We are hoping candidates will find this very beneficial, and if so, we will begin offering programs for the other disciplines. You can see more about the Alpine Level I prep webinars by going to www.psia-e.org/intro.

New Committees

Also new this summer, we formed two new committees. First, a **Scholarship Committee**. In the past, Eastern scholarships were awarded by a group of Eastern Board members. The Board has moved this committee to operations, and we have selected a wonderful group of volunteers. The Scholarship Committee will assist in recommending scholarship criteria, publicizing and soliciting applications, and making awards based on the applicants' responses. Last year 190 applicants received awards averaging \$123. This committee will help make our scholarship program even stronger. We have also created a **Philanthropy Committee**. This committee will aid in the development of long-term financial resources for the Education Foundation by developing a fundraising strategy and activities.

Please see the sidebar for a list of volunteers and be sure to thank them for helping our region support the needs of our members now, and into the future.

Spring Leadership Meeting

In other efforts to help ensure the Eastern Region is meeting the needs of our members, this spring, we brought Education Staff coaches and coordinators together for a meeting in the Albany office. The meeting had three primary goals. 1) Review the wins and learns from last season's assessments to identify opportunities to improve the process and share best practices between disciplines and with other regions. 2) Explore the structure of the education staff and make it more consistent and transparent. 3) Define requirements for the Ed Staff to conduct events in other disciplines; thereby, increasing our pool of resources to offer more events and avoid having to cancel events as happened several times for Adaptive events last season. This was an excellent opportunity for these leaders to gather and share their experiences from the winter.

Regarding the assessment process, as a result of this meeting, and meetings with other National leadership, it was determined the best course of action is to leave the assessment process as is for the 22-23 season. Thus, staff are allowed to have another year of experience with the new assessment form and be better able to determine if future changes in process would help improve consistency and outcomes. Further, National Task Force members are all working toward ways to further align the assessment process and we want to be prepared to adjust as best practices emerge.

Regarding the structure of the Education Staff, internal changes have been implemented that consistently define roles, responsibilities, and benefits across all disciplines. Most importantly, these changes clearly define the process to be elevated once someone has earned a spot on our Development Teams. Typical members shouldn't notice a change; however, if you want to become part of our Education Staff, you may want to check out the "Education Staff Pathway" article, on page 10, for more information.

Other Good News

Your requests for the return of the Event Poster were heard! In order to allow the schedule to stay nimble throughout the season, the Event Poster has been revised to include the dates and locations of assessments and premier events; however, the types of other educational opportunities are only listed, you'll have to check online for dates and locations. We trust this change will provide you with a handy resource in the locker room, while still allowing us to make changes and additions throughout the season.

Financially, the Eastern Region has weathered the Covid years well. Renewals are running ahead of last year by more than 500 members and registrations for our biggest events of the year are strong. Our Master's Academy Event sold out in less than two hours. It is great to see the energy and excitement of our members! Last year, I enjoyed connecting with many of you on my Listening Tour and I hope to be back out on the road again this season. I trust you will see the office has been working hard to put your feedback into action.

The long-range forecasts are calling for a great winter! We can't wait to see you at an event this year! ❄️

Scholarship Committee and Philanthropy Committee Members

The Eastern Region is grateful to the following committee volunteers.

Scholarship Committee

Jodi Bedson	Emily Spiker
Alan Kinney	Alexandra Wallace
Stephen McGrath	Melanie Werenczak
Rebecca Shiffman	

Philanthropy Committee

Evonne Cho	Caroline Linz
Deborah Collins	Joel Richards
Howard Foltz	Sherman White
Nicole Gakidis	Beth Limerick (Chair)

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Snowsports School Management Committee
Gail Setlock



» Gwen Allard, continued from page 1

A Perspective on What's Important

Gwen has always loved to ski. She says she married her husband Ray Allard (also a highly accomplished and celebrated snow pro in his own right), because he was such a beautiful skier.

In reflecting on her career, Gwen doesn't really focus on her accomplishments, executive roles, and groundbreaking ideas. Rather, she always comes back to experiences with individual students. For example, the student with cerebral palsy who initially ignited Gwen's passion and interest in helping those with disabilities and diseases; the young girl with a debilitating childhood disease who came out for one final run only to pass away in the days that followed; the two double amputees who worked and practiced until they had the skills (and equipment) to be able to drive themselves to the resort, put on their own skis, and ski themselves to the chairlift. "And why not?" she says. "When someone decides they want to go out and ski, well, they can!"

Gwen, who knows that adaptive instruction isn't limited just to snowsports, applauds advances in science – particularly the prosthetics and braces that allow people to ski despite having had accidents or amputations. "They get out and run, they ski. They do whatever they want," she says.

For Gwen the emphasis has never been on her own accomplishments; rather, it's been on helping others get access to a sport that she loves. "I have tons of stories about teaching disabled people," she says. They are wonderful people; they know what life is all about."

Advice for Future Pros

Admittedly, not everything came easily for Gwen. "Some of the mental disabilities are hard to work with,

particularly when they can't speak," she says. But gifted adaptive instructors know these people communicate in other ways. "They speak with their eyes, their smiles, with grunts and groans," she says. "They know they're skiing; they're doing what other people can do."

Many of the opportunities and resources available to current PSIA-AASI members are the result of the efforts of Gwen and others like her. She has advice for instructors of today: "There is someone you know who wants to ski and have the mountains opened up for them," she says. "Teach them."

For adaptive instructors, she adds: "Don't be narrow-minded. Regardless of what they have (or don't have), they can do it. You might have to go mechanical, but nothing is impossible. They can make that ski turn."

Gwen's determination and never-say-die attitude resulted in thousands of people learning to ski and ride who would never have previously had the opportunity. For this, she will join some of the most celebrated skiers, riders, and winter visionaries in the US Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in a ceremony that will be held in Big Sky, MT in March. Gwen, who hasn't skied in two years after a fall forced her to the sidelines, plans to make a run in a sit-ski with her now-grown children in Montana.

"I'm really old," she says. "But I'll never give up. One thing I have learned is that each stage of life gives us something special.

"I'm not convinced I'm through with my skiing stage quite yet." «

zipperline

It's (sometimes) Your Equipment

By Chris Ericson
PSIA-E Examiner

PSIA-E Certification Committee Chair

For many of the articles I have written, I have had a general theme of *setting yourself* (or your customers) *up for success*. In the limited amount of time we have in building relationships, our ability in selecting the proper terrain, learning about our student, communicating and observing our student's behaviors or just being a good listener; setting our students up for success is incredibly important in what we do. As Educational Staff, working with the Eastern membership to help you develop a strong base of knowledge in technical abilities, coaching and teaching styles or gaining some insight into movement analysis, is something we all enjoy and take very seriously. As you prepare for this season, set yourself up for success and learn more about what you are sliding on and how to maintain it.

For years we have been discussing the importance of a proper boot fit. There have been untold numbers of articles written about what the proper fit feels and looks like. By now, we should all be in agreement that a "snug" properly fitting boot is ideal so that input from foot to the ski is as accurate as possible. We have also gotten specific with the type of foot bed we choose and how that impression of your foot was made using the latest technology. Then of course you get the question: Which boot fitter do you use? That's not a road I will go down, but in short, I have used many over the course of my ski career and each has helped me along the way. In all cases, your boot fitter should be selecting a boot that works for *your foot* and not just the one in *Ski Magazine* that got great reviews or is that perfect color you have been looking for. Ultimately, after all that work in the ski shop, our goal is to be standing in our boots in a neutral position. Depending on our individual make-up and build of our body, this can be pretty simple with a few standard modifications, or a more aggressive approach of grinding, heating and punching out a side to accommodate all those "characteristics" your lovely feet may have.

It seems however, that over the years, the ski itself has been left to play second fiddle to its partner, the boot. I would agree, that without a proper fitting boot, everything else is pretty much a moot point. However, the equipment that interacts with the snow first with making those parallel arced lines in the snow or a beautifully skidded turn, requires more than just execution on your part. It requires a ski that will do as it's told and not prevent you from accessing the fundamentals.

It is sometimes understandable how the general Snowsports enthusiast puts little thought into their ski maintenance. They go to the shop in the fall, get the yearly \$50 tune, which may include a few runs over the belt sander and some wax, and off they go. They ski every other weekend (or less) and the performance is fine, since it's likely they really don't know what to expect anyway.

For the Snowsports professional, we should expect more. And for the person going for the next level in a certification assessment, we should expect a very good understanding that weekly or even daily maintenance of your boards is essential. You train so hard on developing strong fundamentals, working on various activities, only to be on a ski that doesn't do what it should. It's not just about waxing or sharpening your skis, but also about how your bases are set up. Having flat bases and a proper structure in the base is crucial for the best performance from your skis.

The science behind structuring is to put grooves into the base material. By having these little grooves in the base, it helps to remove suction that a perfectly smooth base would produce. In general, a finer structure is desired in colder snows as it holds the smaller amount of water longer and helps the glide of the ski. Any kind of drag from the ski is potentially going to lead to some miscues in the application of fundamentals. There are a bunch of different types of structures, so you will have to explore which one will work best for you, in the majority of conditions you ski. Choose a reputable shop that has experienced technicians running their stone grinding machines who can put the correct structure in the base.

When a ski is not flat, it can be either concave or convex. When you have concave bases (edges that are higher than the base) the skis can be overly grippy making it nearly impossible to complete your turn. On the other hand, a convex ski base (base is higher than the edges) will tend to wander and make it hard for you to hold an edge. Thinking about the fundamentals, can you see how just having a base

that is not flat could affect the ability to *control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation*? Activities like railroad track turns or even a straight run would be challenging. In all cases, you want the ski to run smoothly and fast through the snow.

So, what does my tune schedule look like? It clearly depends on how much time I spend on the snow, but for 3-4 days a week on the snow, it looks like this.

- Everyday: Coming off the snow, towel dry skis and check for any bures on the edges. Stone the edges if needed.
- Every 4 days: Waxing. This includes removing the wax (scraping it off) and lots of brushing. I use a Roto brush system which helps to remove the wax in the structure and gets the base polished.
- Every 2 weeks: Sharpen the edges. I set my base bevel at .5 Deg and my side at 3 Deg. I use a file and a stainless-steel file guide set at my specific angles. I also use a Swix Evo Pro Edge Tuner.
- Twice a season: Skis get stoneground with a chevron structure added.

More than once I have traded skis with a fellow instructor to let them feel what they were missing. Most of the time I find it difficult to even complete a turn on their equipment, which is wobbly, unstable and feels like a dull butter knife. They of course, are taking off down the hill with my equipment.

Setting ourselves up for success starts with the equipment. A properly fitted and sized boot is undoubtably very important and can have the most impact on our success. However, don't forget about the skis and your tuning/maintenance program. Skis that run fast and smooth respond to driver input much more directly and allow all of us to explore the Technical Fundamentals as intended. «

Life is better on the slopes.



Correction

In the Spring 2022 issue of the SnowPro, "A Day in the Life of a Ski Instructor" author, Karen Armour, was incorrectly listed as working at Hidden Valley in Pennsylvania; her correct resort is Holiday Valley in Ellicottville, New York.

Make an Impact: An Everyday Application of the Learning Connection Model and Performance Guides

By Sue Kramer

PSIA-E Alpine Examiner Coach

ACE Team Member

USSS Sports Education Clinician

For the past 6 years, leaders from every region have collaborated with each other over what makes good skiing and riding and what makes good teaching. The Learning Connection Model and accompanying Performance Guides break these two general areas into digestible parts (even though at first or even second glance it doesn't look that way). The Learning Connection Model is not new but for some folks it may still seem obscure. Technical Skills includes skiing/riding performance and the ability to understand movement, Teaching Skills incorporates the ability to shape the learning environment and People Skills covers the ability to develop trust. This article will provide some examples of how, even as a veteran instructor, you can use these resources to grow your toolbox and unleash your inner master teacher. The article is divided into three sections, one representing each of the Skill areas of the Learning Connection Model. The examples are geared toward the intermediate zone and are intended to be used as fodder for further professional discussions.

Looking at the Assessment Criterion in Technical Skills for Level II the National Standards state:

The Level II instructor consistently demonstrates the ability to accurately identify and describe ideal performances, using two or more alpine fundamentals through the intermediate zone.

Here's an example of how to describe the ideal movement pattern based on the intermediate zone for a parallel skier on blue groomed terrain:

At the turn transition, and for a split second, the skier's upper body and lower body are lined up to each other, like in an athletic stance but while still traveling along the arc. The skier's center of mass is lined up over their feet and remains this way throughout each phase of the turn. (Fundamental 1: control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the skis). Before the fall line the skier slightly reduces pressure off of the old outside ski and as result, pressure gradually increases to the new outside ski where it remains "dominant" until the skier skis through and past the fall line (Fundamental 2: Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski). At the same time, the skier's legs progressively rotate slightly more than the upper body both simultaneously and also independently of each other so that the path of the center of mass and upper body are slightly inside of the path of the legs and skis (Fundamental 3: Control the skis' rotation with leg rotation, separate from the upper body).

Understanding the "ideal" performance for a given situation provides the necessary comparison when describing the performance of the "real" student. To develop this technical skill practice describing, out loud, ideal skiing performances based on body movements and how that effects the equipment. Remember to take terrain, speed and snow conditions into consideration. For further development, practice describing the ideal based on a different combination of fundamentals.

Now let's examine the Assessment Criterion in Teaching Skills for Level II that says:

A Level II instructor consistently demonstrates their ability to collaborate with students to establish and adapt a lesson plan with clear direction and focus.

From the Technical Skills example we have a group of intermediate skiers, skiing on blue terrain. They all more or less ski parallel but are looking to do it with greater ease and with a greater ability to manage their speed. At this point it would be helpful to put the Teaching/Learning Cycle to practice because this is the overall framework for the flow of the lesson. This article won't go through the cycle step by step but will offer a few ideas as starting points.


Based on student intentions (to ski parallel with greater ease and to have better speed control), if this were my group, I'd first recall the three fundamentals mentioned in the Technical Skills portion of analysis. When someone expresses the desire for better flow or to ski with greater ease, I think of the moment in turning when we transition from outside ski to outside ski, and of the fundamental of controlling pressure from ski to ski and directing pressure from outside ski to outside ski.

The direction and focus that would address the stated intention would be to concentrate on the turn transition and specifically on redistributing weight above the fall-line. I'd ask the student to make the old outside ski a little lighter before moving into the shaping phase of the turn. I'd use a coaching cue that references something else, something that most people are familiar with like pedaling on a bike: when one leg extends the other retracts or flexes. I'd call attention to the leg that I want to slightly retract- the old outside leg. This action results in a solid platform for the skier to stand on. The timing is crucial here because most skiers do shift pressure to the outside ski but often it's late in the turn, with a follow-up transition that takes more effort. By focusing on this movement *above* the fall-line the skier moves from foot to foot with greater ease. They are then able to control the ski's rotation, because when they rotate their legs in the direction of travel, the tails of the skis follow the path of the tips of the skis, leave a smooth arc. Think about using a screwdriver with a piece of wood. With pressure properly applied to the tool, the screw goes in. Without enough pressure or applied at the wrong angle, the screw doesn't bite.

Teaching Skills covers the ability to assess and plan, implement a course of action, and reflect and review. *Collaborating with students to establish and adapt a lesson plan with clear direction and focus* is but one small piece of a much larger teaching puzzle. Study and apply the Teaching Skills assessment criteria and you'll end up with a cohesive and impactful lesson.

We do and say things that have a direct impact on our students and determine whether or not they *trust* us. How do we know the impact of our behavior? One Assessment Criterion for People Skills at Level II states, *the Level II instructor consistently demonstrates the ability to adapt verbal and non-verbal communication based on the observations of individuals and of the group.*

How do I know if my actions will contribute to a positive outcome? The Performance Guide for People Skills offers an example of what it would look like to *demonstrate the ability to adapt verbal and non-verbal communication based on the observations of individuals and of the group.*

continued on next page 

» zipperline, continued

Behind on Education Credits? – Here’s What You Need to Know

Remember that if you are an Active Certified Member, you are required to earn a minimum of 6 CEUs (a 1-day event or the equivalent) every season or 12 CEUs (a 2-day event or the equivalent) every other season. Certified Lifetime, Alumni Members and Registered Members are exempt from CEU requirements.

If you’re a Certified Member and haven’t maintained or met your CEU requirements:

- Your membership card will indicate that your **education status** is **Inactive**.
- You’ll be required to **make up your missed credits**.
- You had a **\$50 Education Prepayment fee** on your membership dues renewal statement. The great news about that Prepayment fee is:
 - When you paid that Prepayment fee, a **\$50 voucher was created which can be used toward an Eastern event this season when you register**.

To return to certified **active** status, you’ll need to complete the minimum number of CEUs as follows:

- If you are 1 year behind on your education credits, you’ll need to do: 12 CEUs
- If you are 2 years behind, you’ll need to do: 18 CEUs
- If you are 3 years behind, you’ll need to do: 24 CEUs
- If you are 4 years behind, you’ll need to do: 24 CEUs

If you don’t earn the minimum number of CEUs at the end of 4 years, you’ll be reassigned to the Alumni Member category.

Check out the Eastern Event Schedule at: www.psia-e.org/ev/schedule

Make your plans now and we’ll look forward to seeing you at an event soon!

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to email us at psia-e@psia-e.org or call the office at (518) 452-6095. We are here to help! ⚡

» **Make an Impact, continued from previous page**

It says,

[The instructor consistently] *responds to cues from group members by altering their verbal and nonverbal communication in an apparent attempt to engage them in the experience.*

From the situation described above, to engage the student in the learning experience I would ask questions, listen to the answer, and ask follow-up questions:

Coach: “Does this makes sense?”

Student: “Wow, by doing that little thing, what did you call it? Pedaling? Turning just feels easier.”

Coach: “Great, now let’s go practice.”

To engage the student non-verbally, I’d observe body language:

Does the body language represent engagement or withdrawal?

I would alter my behavior based on the messaging I observed from their non-verbal communication. This could include:

- a different explanation.
- a more accurate demonstration or from a different view point.
- more practice.
- a change in tone of voice.
- more encouragement.
- more (or less) feedback.

Similar to the example provided in Teaching Skills, the ability to *demonstrate the ability to adapt verbal and non-verbal communication based on the observations of individuals and of the group* is one of the assessment criteria for People Skills, which as a whole determines our ability to develop relationships based on trust. Reference the Performance Guide and The National Standards for People Skills to learn about the other assessment criteria in this area.

The Learning Connection Model and The Performance Guides can be and should be used every day as references, examples, and guidance for teaching that once understood will most definitely have a positive impact on **your** teaching experiences. ⚡

Education Committee Report

By Angelo Ross

PSIA-E Examiner, ACE Team member

Eastern Education Committee Chair

I would like to start by thanking our CEO Kathy Brennan for reinstating the Eastern Education Committee, a decision congruent with our mission of providing excellence in educational programs for our membership. We are a multidiscipline committee with members whose primary disciplines include adaptive, alpine, snowboard, and telemark. I would also like to thank committee members Tina Buckley, Chris Dayton, Brian McVicker, Tom Mulligan, Jay Nation, Danielle Needle, Ali Spaulding, Mickey Sullivan and Augie Young, who have been busy since June on a few initiatives. And because these endeavors are often complex and time consuming, I’d like to thank Don Haringa, Karen Haringa, Chris Ericson, and Erik Barnes for support and insights provided to the Committee that definitely kept (or in some cases, got) us on the right track.

We are in the process of reevaluating, updating, and rewriting all Eastern course descriptions, a time-consuming endeavor that, when complete, will provide more accurate and user-friendly information for you to select courses that suit your needs.

The Education Committee has subsumed the role of the eLearning Task Force which formed in spring of 2020 to add more outstanding online learning opportunities in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. In that vein, recently, we kicked off our pre-season series of online events, starting with National Team member Mike Ma’s excellent presentation “All Lessons Are Adaptive”; the following week, we started our Snowsports Management Series, a three-part webinar series that highlights the practical usability of the pillars of our national curriculum – People Skills, Teaching Skills, and Technical Skills – in planning program curricula, enhancing the guest experience, and in instructor training and development.

At the time of this writing, it is 43° F in southwestern Pennsylvania. Crimson and yellow are peeking out of the tree line; I built the first fire of the season in the fireplace yesterday morning. Predictions are optimistic for the season, and I choose to believe every word of them. I am hopeful for an early start and am looking forward to making some turns with as many of you as possible in the upcoming season. Take care, be safe. ⚡



LIBERTY WOMEN'S SKATE TO SKI CLINIC



"This summer the Rollerblade van logged thousands of miles across the country delivering Skate to Ski clinics at resorts, retail shops, and community parks. Along the way several PSIA-AASI members participated in events that worked on gliding, turning, and then combining those movements to hone their skills for the upcoming season! Thanks to everyone who joined the fun. We look forward to seeing more of you next year."

Heidi Ettliger, PSIA-AASI Team Alumna | Rollerblade Clinic Leader



The longest season in the East.



Join the Killington Snow Sports School as a **Temporary Ski Instructor** teaching youth groups from the UK. We are looking for ski instructors to commit to 5 consecutive days for one or more of these sessions:
February 10-14, 11-15, 12-16 or April 2-6, 3-7, 2023.

We offer:

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- Low Cost Lodging available
- Food & Drink Discounts, 60% off food & drink
- Earn Transferrable Lift Tickets, for each day of work good for use this season and all of the 2023-2024 season.

If interested please fill out an online application at killington.com/jobs, **scan the QR code** or contact Deb Fennell, dfennell@killington.com



around the east

Education Staff Pathway

By Kathy Brennan
Eastern Division CEO

New for the 2022-23 season, the PSIA-AASI Eastern Region Education Staff has been reorganized and the process for being elevated is clearer and more straightforward. There are several reasons for the reorganization, including:

- Defining roles, responsibilities, and benefits, with consistency across all disciplines.
- Making decisions to elevate someone to more responsibility, for example conducting assessments, leading certain clinics, or scoring a tryout, based upon a body of work, feedback/reviews, desire, commitment, and similar inputs that are clearly defined and accessible, versus performance at a single event/tryout.
- Providing leadership with a structure and guidelines to move employees up or down within job categories as necessary to meet the demands of our membership.
- Reviewing staff member's performance periodically, or as needed, to provide specific action plans to maintain or improve performance is important for on-going quality assurance.
- Eliminating the requirement for Development Team members, who had been leading clinic groups and doing Level 1 Assessments, to have to try out on a periodic basis in order to continue in their role.
- Recognizing the Development Team is a training role and team members should remain in this role until such time, through thoughtful

consideration by our leadership, it is determined they should be invited to join our education staff, or their term expires. Development Team members will not work events until we are prepared to make them a member of our education staff.

- Recognizing that ACE (Advanced Children's Educators) Team members are conducting vital Children's Specialist Assessments (CS1 & CS2), and as such, are fulfilling the role of Examiner.
- Defining minimum work commitments to maintain a position and earn benefits, like paid training. Minimum requirements were introduced prior to COVID, but, as a result of COVID, were difficult to enforce. To effectively manage our staff, it is important minimum requirements are reinstated.

For most of our employees the changes are minor, and most members will not notice any change. The biggest change is, once a Development Team member has been elevated from the pure training role to conducting events for our members, they will no longer be required to tryout to retain their position, or to gain a position on the Examiner Training Squad (ETS). Instead, there is a defined application process to get selected for the Advanced Training Program (ATP). The ATP will help a staff member to develop their skills with the goal of being elevated to a role that has a broader range of responsibilities. For example, to elevate from doing

Level I assessments to Level II/III assessments, or from scoring Level II/III assessments to conducting staff training or scoring tryouts. If an employee is happy and proficient in their role, and satisfies the work requirements, they may continue as is without applying for the ATP.

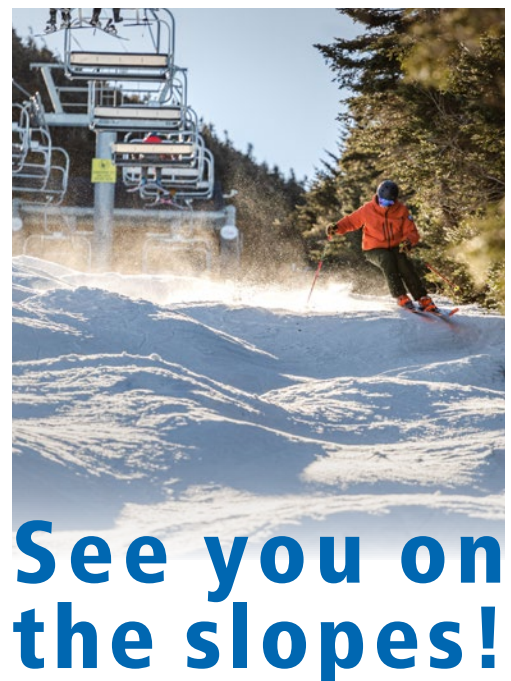
As a result of this change, several former Development Team and ACE Team members, who have been leading clinic groups and conducting Level 1 Assessments or Children's Specialist Assessments have been elevated to Examiner status. We also have several people who, under the old system, had completed their training to conduct Level 2 & 3 Assessments, they have also been elevated to Examiners. If you see any of these amazing staff members, please thank them for their dedication to our organization.

If you are interested in trying out for a position on our Development Teams there are several opportunities this season, and we anticipate conducting another Alpine tryout in 2023-24. We look forward to seeing you at one of these events. <<

Cross Country Dev Team	Trapp Family Lodge	March 4 – 5
Snowboard Dev Team	Killington	March 13 – 15
Telemark Dev Team	Killington	March 18 – 19

New Examiners

Mark Aiken	Alexandra Doro	Gregory Paquin
Eric Anderson	Maureen Drummey	Anthony Parissi
Victor Antonelli	Joseph Forte	James Polinchok
Anthony Bailey	Joseph Hanzalik	Megan Price
Ian Boyle	Lindsey Harris	David Raybould
Kathryn Brinton	James Hayes	Keri Reid
Martina Buckley	Matthew Heller	Shawn Riggle
John Carey	Eric Kelley	Keith Rodney
Candace Charles	Jeff Korajczyk	Angelo Ross
Wayne Conn	Michael Logsdon	Chris Roundy
Gordon "Chip" Cox	Michael Ma	Charles Roy
Ben Craig	Jeannie Masters	Timothy Shannon
Ned Crossley	Paul Mawhinney	Alessandra Spaulding
Loren Dailey	Patrick McCord	Evan Vomacka
Lynette Dawson	Nathaniel Mead	Adele Wellman
Benjamin DeBenedictis	Art Menichini	Eric Wright
Elizabeth Doan	Thomas Mulligan	Bethany Yellis
Brian Dolin	Bonnie O'Hara	Martin Young



See you on the slopes!

Dick and Leslie White Honored by Pennsylvania Hall of Fame

By Mark Aiken

The Pennsylvania Snowsports Hall of Fame doesn't allow "team nominations" – that is, nominations of more than one individual together. However, the individual contributions of Dick and Leslie White,



Dick and Leslie White

longtime PSIA Eastern region members who have contributed to and promoted Adaptive snowsports for decades, stand up enough on their own that they are both part of the 2022 group of inductees. They were involved for years with the Special Olympics, and they founded Blue Ridge Adaptive Snow Sports (BRASS) at Liberty Mountain, PA. "We are very proud of the program we built with the help of Liberty's management and a group of wonderful instructors," says Leslie.

Both Dick and Leslie had long careers in adaptive snowsports. Their introduction came through their involvement in the Special Olympics, which led them to Disabled Sports USA (now renamed Move United), an organization that worked with disabled athletes and instructors and eventually partnered with PSIA to offer Adaptive certifications. Leslie first earned a DSUSA Level I certification at DSUSA's Ski Spectacular event at Breckenridge, CO in 1988 and joined PSIA soon

thereafter. The Ski Spectacular is still held annually at Breck, and it offers PSIA Adaptive clinics as well as events for adaptive skiers. "Dick and I have gone numerous times to earn our PSIA continuing ed credits," Leslie says. "Dick also taught disabled students at the event."

They joined the ski and snowboard school staff at Liberty Mountain in the early-1990s. In 1997, they started BRASS, recruiting Liberty instructors to staff the adaptive program. During their tenure, the Whites and their team made Liberty and central Pennsylvania a major player in adaptive skiing. The program became known in instructor circles and in PSIA-AASI for its comprehensive training program. They were known and appreciated in the surrounding areas among families with disabled members for the job they did getting such skiers on snow. "The parents of BRASS students freely and actively recommend our program to their friends," Leslie says.

Working with adaptive students takes care, compassion, and patience. Dick and Leslie have all three. One parent of an autistic son who skied in the BRASS program had this to say: "Dick and Leslie probably do not realize that they changed Andrew's life. The environment they provided for Andrew gave him purpose and enjoyment. In a world where most individuals with autism struggle with challenges continually, Leslie and Dick provided a program where a little boy who struggled to walk on wet sidewalks is now confidently skiing down mountains."

Congratulations to Dick and Leslie White on your induction to the Pennsylvania Snowsports Hall of Fame, and thank you for your contribution to adaptive snowsports in Pennsylvania. ☞

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national report

By Eric Jordan
PSIA-E Examiner
National Board Representative

Greetings, I hope everyone had a great summer and fall. Winter is quickly approaching and your team at PSIA-AASI has been hard at work during the off season in order to provide you with another amazing season.

I encourage you to visit thesnowpros.com as you prep for the upcoming season. There are a ton of great educational resources at your fingertips as well as plenty of pro deals from our sponsors.

Your National volunteer leadership has been very busy since my last report, and we continue to work on several projects in order to strengthen alignment, unity, and consistency across the country. Some examples of this vision come via our National Standards, Performance Guides and Assessment forms. The PSIA-AASI Board is laser focused on strengthening alignment and unity across the organization via our ends and we are committed to working on your behalf to provide you with the best membership experience possible. Ends refer to the goals that the CEO and the Board of Directors are asked to meet and they are outlined in the Bylaws.

As you may have heard, Nick Herrin has accepted a new position and is no longer our CEO. Nick did an amazing job during his tenure and has taken our organization to new heights. We have put together a Search Committee that has been hard at work all summer/fall in order to find our next National CEO. As part of this process, we have hired the search firm of Sterling Martin to assist us in finding the most qualified candidate to lead our organization. Sterling Martin brings vast amounts of experience and resources to the table, and they truly understand our organization as well as our values and mission. They assisted us with our last search when we hired Nick, and I am very confident that they will once again help us find our next CEO. The application process is open so please check out the full job description at smartinsearch.com/psiaaasiceo/

Please feel free to reach out to me via email at enj5050@yahoo.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Best wishes for a great winter and I hope to see you on the hill soon! <<

Eric Jordan

Education Foundation News

Education Foundation Donors

The PSIA-E Education Foundation expresses its sincere appreciation to the following members who have contributed at least \$50.00 to the Foundation through the annual dues “add-on” program and standalone donations since May. Since no dues or program fees go to the EF, contributions are the primary source of support for the Foundation and its scholarships. **Thank you!**

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David Greenleaf	Robert Montbach	
Thomas Haas	Stephen Moore	



CALLING ALL FUTURE PROS

The *SnowPro* publication is featuring pictures of our Future Snow Pros.

What did their first day sliding on snow look like?

Share their adventure!



Luke Gunnar Mawhinney (Age: 25 months - Front yard, PA)

Submit your child or grandchild's image here:

<https://fs9.formsite.com/PSIA-AASI-E/FuturePro/index.html>



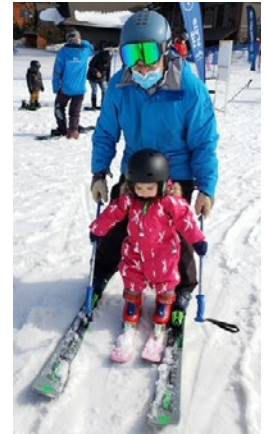
Lucia Gelb
4 years
Snowbird, UT

Future Snow Pros

What did these future Snow Pros look like on the first day they slid on snow?!



Noah Miller
18 Months
Blue Hills



Dakota Lazzaro
2 ½ years
Mountain Creek, NJ



Daniela Swart
2 years
Wisp, MD



Aris Morton
5 years
Iowa

kids, kids, kids

Never Stop Learning

By Griz Caudle

Snowboard Level III, Eastern ACE Team member

There is a lot of truth to Robert Fulghum's All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten. Many developmental psychologists believe humans can perform all the tasks required to survive by age five. In many cultures around the world, a child of this age can and must fend for themselves.

However, paraphrasing Isaac Asimov, there are many educational moments yet to come. Within PSIA-AASI, we constantly strive to help members continue their learning and their development of skiing/riding skills through educational events. As an ACE Team member I have conducted many such events, most notably the Children's Specialist accreditations. This past season I had the opportunity to conduct an in-house Children's Specialist 1 event at Belleayre Mountain set up by ski school director Jennifer Schmidt.



Griz's Belleayre Group

What made this event particularly noteworthy was the group of participants. I always joke that if I can do it at age 74, then you can all give it a shot. I have always been the elder statesman at my events... until this CS1. Have you ever managed an age split in a lesson? Like, for example, a 7-year-old paired with a 12-year-old? Well, the age split in this CS1 was 67 years.



Stephen



Chloe

Meet Stephen, an 83-year-old snowboarder with the enthusiasm of a teenager, and wisdom gained over eight decades. He is the most senior participant I've ever had in a Children's event, and he was ready to take on challenging spring conditions.

Meet Chloe, a 16-year-old high school student from New York City who was on the race team at Belleayre, and she ripped! The youngest CS candidate I've ever had, she was wise beyond her years, she absorbed information and applied it in her teaching segments.

On the first day I asked the pairs of participants to create a lesson. Their task was to instruct an 8-year-old with intermediate skills to navigate sketchy terrain to a safe stopping point 100 yards down the slope. They had to teach in tandem, both skiing and riding skills. Chloe paired with Stephen despite being younger than his granddaughter. It was a sight to see as they navigated the terrain teaching and working in concert to complete the task. I realized in that moment that education and learning know no age limitations. If you are willing, it happens. You learn, you share ideas, and you begin to facilitate others' learning. It was a fun-filled, educational, and successful two days at Belleayre, proving once again that you're never too old or too young to learn. We should all take a lesson from this in our journeys as snowsports instructors: never stop learning! <<

So, a Snowboarder, a Telemarker and a Skier Walk into a CS Event...

By Harold Smith

PSIA-E Examiner, Eastern ACE Team member

Not to disappoint, but there is no punchline here! This is how Children's Specialist (CS) events are set up. Unique among PSIA-AASI events, CS1 and CS2 assessments are multi-discipline events, meaning that on the first morning of your event, you may look at your fellow participants and see different footwear and sliding tools. You may also begin that day with the notion that teaching kids to snowboard is different from teaching kids to ski. While it is true that there are differences among each discipline's Technical fundamentals, our Teaching and People skills are the same for all coaches.

Regardless of your preferred mode of sliding downhill, CS assessments focus largely on developing creative coaching anchored solidly in all three areas of the Learning Connection. Whether you're on skis or a snowboard, ideas like promoting exploration and play with children, finding ways to adapt to the sometimes rapidly changing needs of those little learners, and finding ways to manage activities and pacing should apply to any coaching scenario for kids.

In a multi-discipline CS group, however, the technical application of People Skills and Teaching Fundamentals may well change because having kids learn to manipulate two skis differs from having them manipulate a snowboard from a fixed-width stance. And this is where each discipline's Technical fundamentals come into play. Having run a number of CS assessments, I've found that for me and for the candidates, the extra value in having a mix of sliding tools comes from seeing the similarities of how different things slide on snow: engaging and

disengaging the edges, controlling pressure along the length of the tool, using efficient body movements to rotate one or both tools, and managing changes in the amount of pressure developed against the tool.

To explore edging skills in a visual realm for 7 to 9-year-olds, for example, a snowboard CS candidate might show the narrow line left in the snow from a toe-edge traverse and compare it to a wider, flatter track coming from using less edge angle with the board. The student's goal might be to make a skinny track in one direction and a wider track in another, or to maybe alternate skinny-flat down the fallline, etc. Inspired by this, the ski-enabled candidate just does math and realizes skiers can leave two tracks. At any rate, the whole CS group is then off exploring and experimenting with edging skill development via the track/tracks left in the snow.

Possibly more valuable to the development of skilled children's coaches may be the refinement in candidates' Movement Assessment (MA) skills given a mixed-tool group. Here, the key is to understand that the discipline-specific Fundamentals share a great deal across disciplines: control of pressure fore and aft along the tool, edging resulting from efficient body movements, control of the tool's rotation also through efficient body movements, etc. In the edging activity above, MA starts with looking for the line in the snow, then looking for the angle/attitude of the specific tool, and then looking for appropriate body movements. In a CS event, everybody is looking at each other on different tools, but doing a similar analysis. To me, the biggest benefit of CS events not being limited to a specified discipline is in the experience we get from an unbiased look at tool performance in the snow, the body movements which cause

continued on next page >>

» kids, kids, kids, continued

» So, a Snowboarder, etc...
continued from previous page

the performance and the connection to a discipline's Technical Fundamentals.

Using the 'lens' of a variety of people on a variety of equipment to focus on MA skills is important enough to us on the ACE Team that it was the major focus of our end-of-season springtime training day, last April at Stowe. Aside from enjoying a warm, sunny day ripping soft snow with colleagues, we spent time exploring how turn transitions might vary, given that the crew included skiers, snowboarders and longtime ACE Teammate, telemarker Keith Rodney, a current PSIA-AASI National team member. In small, mixed-tool groups, we spent a couple runs watching for the timing of edge (or edges!) change, use of rotational movements at different speeds, as well as control of pressure along the length of each sliding tool. Most interesting to me as a skier was the variable use of board twist by snowboarders, a tool-performance only passively employed in skiing, but one actively selected and varied by talented snowboarders.

So, although many of us spend most of our downhill time sliding with similarly-tooled friends, there can be great benefits to watching and sliding and talking with those on different tools. It allows a multi-discipline approach to MA that can be liberating, forcing an unbiased look at the effect of body movement on the tool, and leading to a clearer understanding of specific and generalized Technical fundamentals. Of course, as we discovered last April at Stowe, it's also wicked fun to rip around the hill with friends on all types of sliding equipment. <<

we got next! NextCore News

NextCore is a dedicated group of young members age 16-39 who are working together to promote the change and develop the programs and benefits vital to long-term engagement of the "next core" of PSIA-AASI membership.

'Next Steps' Mentorship Program: Wins from Round 1, Learns for Round 2

By Matt Lyerly

NextCore Program Director

Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 1, Freestyle Specialist 1
Massanutten Resort, VA

Greetings Eastern Members, Last season, the NextCore Action Committee launched its Inaugural 'Next Steps' Mentorship Program. In the program, we paired members of the Ed Staff with folks in the NextCore demographic (16-39 years old) for one-on-one networking and guidance throughout the 2021-2022 snow season. Pairings were given the freedom to communicate in the manner and frequency they deemed appropriate. We conducted an end-of-season survey to gauge reception to the program from both parties.

Most mentors and mentees gave high numerical scores for professionalism/punctuality/and usefulness of the program, all of which we were delighted to see. Common methods of communication included email discussions, texts/calls, and zoom meetings. Several pairings expressed interest in spending time together on snow but noted that geographical distance was a challenge. Spending time together on snow was not one of our initial goals but we were pleasantly surprised to see this

was a hot topic. Several pairings were able to meet in person. Moving forward, we will consider geographic distance and/or region more strongly when putting together matches.

Overall, our program was well-received by participants on both sides of the program. Several areas of improvement on our end include having a strong vetting process up front, pairing mentors and mentees together from similar regions, and enhanced communication by NextCore. Thanks again to all who participated and helped us along the way in round one of the Mentorship Program.

NextCore members will have the chance to enroll in the 2022 – 2023 Mentorship Program later in the fall.

Have a question about NextCore, or want to participate on our Action Committee? Send me an email and check out our Facebook page.

mwlyerly@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NextcoreEast> <<



Who's Got Next?

By James Billingslea III
NextCore Action Group member
Alpine Level III, Children's Specialist 1
Liberty Mountain Resort, PA

Winter is fast approaching, and I am excited to bring you another issue of "Who's Got Next." Who's Got Next provides a platform for younger members to discuss what membership in PSIA-AASI and Next Core means to them and how they use the organization to help continue to grow in their roles. For me personally, Who's Got Next provided networking opportunities and helped me meet new friends and likeminded snowsports enthusiasts, and expand my skiing circle throughout the Eastern Region. This issue spotlights two rising stars, who, despite their youth, have a combined seventeen years in PSIA-AASI between them. At this time, I would like to introduce you to Matthew Lyerly and Emily Absalom. I have worked with Matthew and Emily on the Next Steps program and cannot say enough great things about what they bring to the organization. As always, we encourage you to reach out to younger members at your home resort and find out Who's Got Next! Interested in joining Next Core? Find us on facebook at facebook.com/groups/NextcoreEast. #ShareTheStoke



Matthew Lyerly:
Next Core Program Coordinator
Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 1,
Freestyle Specialist 1
Massanutten Resort, VA

How did you hear about Next Core and why did you want to join?

I was on the original Next Core Team that [former Next Core Coordinator] Katherine MacLauchlan put together. I had been doing some writing for SnowPro and got my name out there enough so that she reached out. Being part of a creative, project-oriented group is something I've always enjoyed and been pretty good at. I enjoy networking and collaborating with others with similar goals and interests. The fact that I got to be a part of a group that talked about all things snowsports was even better. It was a no-brainer to accept the invite to be a part of the team.

What is your role in the Next Core program?

I am the program coordinator. My duties include collaborating with Kathy Brennan on group goals and sharing that info with the planning committee. I try to network and reach out to as many of the office staff as possible. I also help put together our Next Steps Mentorship Program.

What are your personal goals?

I have two big things I'm pursuing right now: L3 Alpine Certification and working as a trainer and fitness coach. I hope to someday work with high-level competitive skiers to help them get as strong and well-conditioned as possible off snow, so all of their athleticism translates to the snow.

How has membership improved you as an instructor?

Without this organization I would not even be an instructor, so it's made all the difference in the world.

What's your favorite mountain to ski?

In the East it has to be Stowe. It has the best big mountain experience, I think. Out West it's probably Snowbird. The Cirque Traverse is pretty intense and there's not a flat spot on the entire mountain.

Deep powder or long fresh Groomer?

This is a tough one. How about a fresh groomer the day after a powder day? I guess it would have to be powder because those days are rare in Virginia.



Emily Absalom:
Next Core Action Group
Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 1
Ski Big Bear, PA

How did you hear about Next Core?

When the Eastern Board of Directors founded Next Core, Bob Shostek called me and encouraged me to apply. I'm grateful he thought of me and am so thrilled to be a part of this incredible group of snowsports professionals.

What made you want to be a part of Next Core?

I've met some of my dearest friends through skiing – people of all ages, from all walks of life. As I began to participate in more PSIA-E events, I realized I didn't know too many people my age who were on the same personal and professional ski journey (come to find out they exist! I just hadn't met them yet). When I heard that the purpose of the PSIA-E Next Core program was to bridge the gap between seasoned members and newer members, I knew I had to be a part of this group. Being a part of Next Core allows me to network with younger members and provide a voice to the Eastern Board of Directors on behalf of the younger membership in an effort to attract and retain members.

How are you involved with Next Core?

I have been a part of Next Core since its inception in November of 2018. I've traveled to Sugarbush, VT to speak on a panel with the National Board of Directors. I've spearheaded marketing campaigns to create and distribute new photo and video content to excite the current membership base and encourage new or interested members to become more active in the organization.

What are your personal goals?

My goals include being a more dynamic, effective, and fun coach. Skiing is one of my greatest passions in life, and I love being able to share with people. For me, there is no greater joy than watching someone's eyes sparkle when they feel a new sensation or learn a new skill. I want to continue my growth by soaking up as much knowledge as I can from my coaches and peers, so I can better guide my clients. I'm a firm believer that "less is more" – students don't always need to be inundated with everything we know as coaches; more often, they need specific and clear feedback directly correlated to their goals. So the more tools I have in my toolbox, the more effective and customized I can be in my approach – leading to a more positive experience for the client and hopefully creating more lifelong skiers!

How has membership helped you improve as an instructor?

Being a part of Next Core has helped me improve as an instructor immensely. Through this network, I've been able to train with fellow instructors (both ski and snowboard) as we navigate the certification process. More importantly, it's allowed me to hone my coaching and mentorship skills as I begin to take on more leadership roles at my home mountain. I can call any one of my fellow Next Core members at any time and bounce ideas off them. This group is so enthusiastic and so willing to help.

What's your favorite mountain to ski?

Jay Peak is one of my favorite mountains to ski – especially for late season trips after the southern resorts have closed. And Elk Mountain deserves an honorable mention for its unobstructed beauty and its slow chairlifts. No, really. It's rare you can have a complete conversation on a high-speed 6-pack. Those Elk Mountain chairs allow you to fully develop an idea – whether it's de-briefing a great lesson you just taught or dissecting one of the ski fundamentals. Elk truly is a winter wonderland!

Deep powder or Long fresh Groomer?

I love playing on groomers to practice a new skill, to synchro ski with fellow instructors, or try to stay in my dad's tracks (as he intentionally tries to lose me). It's peak fun for me! ⚡

xx-ploring

Nordic Preview 22-23: The Season Is Arriving

By Mickey Stone
PSIA-E Nordic Examiner
Nordic Coordinator

We love this time of year. Changing leaves, arrival of new gear, dryland training sessions, cool mornings, and early sunsets are preludes to winter and snow. Those of us who live in northern New England enjoy the summers, and most of us wish for more before the snow comes. We miss the lakes, paddling, waterskiing, and summer wildlife.



Goodbye summer...we'll see you next year!]

Switching our focus to the coming winter, the educational calendar is full of cross country and telemark events. Check out our ever-popular Backcountry Skills Clinic for ALL disciplines, which covers avalanche safety, compass use, map reading and terrain analysis, gear selection, snow analysis and technique. Spearheaded by Backcountry Specialist and farmer extraordinaire Bruce Hennessey, the broadness of information of this online event is worthwhile for anyone who plans to venture into the sidecountry, even if you choose not to do the entire Backcountry Accreditation.

You have many chances to get on snow early in the season for XC skiing. Ski/Teaching Improvement at Rikert Cross Country Center in Middlebury, Vermont is on December 3-4. (Rikert starts making snow before Thanksgiving.) Our ever-popular Instructor Training Course at Bretton Woods with Ski School Director Mike Innes is on December 14-16. This course covers basic, intermediate and advanced skiing technique, our new People Skills focus, reviews our XC Learning Connection model and Cross Country Performance model. Our two-day Early Season Primer is at Mount Van Hoevenberg, near Lake Placid, NY on December 17-18.

Some highlights of the rest of the season are: an on-snow follow up to the online course on World Cup Movements at Mt Van Hoevenberg; a Lite BC Touring clinic at the Adirondack Loj near Lake Placid (meeting there daily and doing day loops around the area); a Lite BC Tour one day and a Tele day at the Stowe Nordic Center and Alpine Resort. Check out our Nordic Schedule online for details on other events mid-season and the rest of our Backcountry Accreditation course. Make this the year you try something different and go to a XC event – rentals are available for all events at the host areas.

Early season Telemark Events are ready to go! The first events are the Early Season Primer at Sunday River on December 7-8 and the Mini Academy at

Killington on December 10-11. The ever-popular Pro Jam is at Killington on December 12-16 for all levels. This year, there will be a new Level 1 college (three days of instruction with feedback and a Level 1 assessment on Thursday and Friday). Then we head south to Seven Springs Resort in Pennsylvania, one of the hottest telemark areas in the East, for another Early Season Primer on December 17-18. This area is overflowing with dedicated certified telemark Skiers thanks to Jim Kapp and the Appalachian Telemark Association.

Finally, we have a Level 1/Upgrade at Holiday Valley, NY on December 20-21 with our dedicated and energetic Development Team member, Adele Wellman. (Note that this is an afternoon/evening event.)

In both Cross Country and Telemark, we have spread events out geographically to minimize travel for members.

My home community in the Richmond area of Vermont has been fortunate to be part of the Cochran's community over the years. The area has a vast skiing history with Mickey Cochran, who started a home-grown ski area around February 1961. He and his wife Ginny operated it for locals and kids to introduce them to racing. The daily cost was 25 cents. They produced eight US Ski Team members from this area in their own family, with Barbara Ann Cochran taking a gold in slalom in 1972. Exactly 50 years after his mom, Ryan Cochran-Siegle, medaled in the Super G at the Beijing Olympics, only .04 seconds behind gold medalist Matthias Mayer. We were fortunate to be able to see and talk to Ryan along with the Cochran's ski racers during a town celebration for him this past spring. That is quite the motivator for local kids in competitive ski racing. Please enjoy the picture below and Ryan's accomplishments. It was a very special day in our town.

You too can make a difference in each lesson you teach and inspire people to enjoy the love of winter sports. Good luck this season and INSPIRE!!! <<



Olympic silver medalist Ryan Cochran-Siegle at Richmond, VT celebration

adaptive airtime

What's Behind the 2022 Adaptive Alpine standards?

By Ed Meltzer

Eastern Adaptive Advisor

PSIA-E Adaptive Examiner, Alpine Level III,

Adaptive Level III, Children's Specialist 2

Over the summer, the PSIA National Adaptive task force did lots of work preparing new national Adaptive Alpine standards. Let's peel back the onion on the new 2022 standards.

The 2022 Adaptive Alpine standards evolved as a natural progression from the 2020 Alpine standards applying many of the tenets of the Alpine standards to Adaptive -- a complicated task given that we have six disciplines adapted from Alpine (mono-ski; bi-ski, 3-track, 4-track, visually impaired and cognitive). The changes will be implemented for Adaptive snowboard next year.

Check out this link for more information about the new Adaptive standard: thesnowpros.org/2022/08/02/updated-adaptive-alpine-certification-standards-now-available/

What does the new Adaptive standard mean for you?

For those interested in Adaptive certification, look for articles, webinars and podcasts at thesnowpros.org that will spell out pathways forward. The new standard refocuses and prioritizes the "One Team" approach. Therefore, Adaptive Alpine certification moving forward will begin with an Alpine Level I certification. On the PSIA-AASI-E Events calendar, there are 3-day events that combine Alpine Level I and Adaptive Level I. (Note: watch the calendar as 2-day Adaptive Level I assessments will be available soon for those who already have their Alpine Level I.)

To achieve Adaptive Alpine Level II, candidates must take and pass one-day accreditation events in each of the six Adaptive disciplines. Plus, candidates will need to earn their Alpine Level II. As they pass each Adaptive portion, they earn an Adaptive Specialist accreditation. Several of the one-day accreditation assessments will be held at Windham Mountain, NY on March 13-16.

The basis for the new direction in Adaptive instruction is not "new." Our focus is the same as it was when Adaptive skiing (and later adaptive riding) entered the winter sports industry decades ago – that is, the adaptations were built on the foundation of Alpine ski teaching and snowboard instruction. As adaptive equipment evolved, the adaptive focus shifted somewhat to be equipment-centric.

The task force is hopeful that our Adaptive ski schools will embrace training with our PSIA-AASI ski schools for the incredible value we bring to each other. I recognize that in some cases, Adaptive ski and ride instructors are not resort employees and cannot train with the Alpine and snowboard staff, but I encourage you to explore possible work-arounds. One thought would be for ski and ride schools to hire Adaptive trainers to periodically offer training. Another would be for independent Adaptive instructors to become resort employees for when the ski school is overloaded with lessons.

Geoff Krill, National Team Adaptive coach has this to say:

"What I love about the changes to the Adaptive standards is that everyone in the organization embarks upon their educational journey with the same basic knowledge of understanding how to implement good skiing and riding. The fact that we are all instructors first and then can find our own areas of specialty within snow sports provides so many opportunities from which to gain knowledge and expertise. I like to think of it this way. You become a

doctor and then choose your focus or specialty. However, everyone has that basic knowledge of medicine. You cannot truly understand the specialty without the foundation of where it came from."

In this 18-minute podcast, Geoff explains the 2022 Adaptive Alpine standards: soundcloud.com/snowpros/091522-geoff-krill-chats-about-the-new-adaptive-alpine-certification-standards

So where do we go from here?

To adaptive and non-adaptive snowsports school directors, join forces. Offer training across the different departments at resort snowsports schools. Figure out a way to communicate scheduled and "pop up" clinics. Create a culture of learning outside the lines.

For instructors: expand your comfort zone. Adaptive instructors, go teach regular ski school groups. Experience being a line instructor. As stated, ski schools need the help, especially during holiday periods. As a side note, I apprehensively signed on to teach conventional ski school during Covid when our adaptive program was very limited in lesson capacity. I initially felt out of my comfort zone but soon discovered a profound satisfaction by teaching never-ever adults and 8-to-14 year-old groups.

Also, see if you can shadow an adaptive lesson when you are not working. Be sure to set up a communication plan before the lesson so that you can make contributions that don't confuse the student.

Since my involvement with the National Adaptive task force, which is comprised of educators from each region, I have learned that most, if not all, have already embraced the Alpine certification prior to entering the Adaptive pathway. Although the change got some initial pushback, the results have been remarkable.

I am confident that when we look back at this fall and winter, we, as an organization, will be also using the word "remarkable" to describe the improvement in the development of our instructors. ☺☺

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Annual Membership Meeting

Grand Summit Hotel,

Northstar I Room,

Killington, Vermont

December 13, 2022 at 4:30pm



In Memoriam



Nick Brewster

James Nicholas Sever Brewster, Jr. “Nick”, 64, of Binghamton, NY, passed away on Tuesday, September 27, 2022. Nick was born on March 24, 1958, in Binghamton, NY, to James Nicholas Sever Brewster, Sr. and Elizabeth Woodruff Brewster. Nick is predeceased by his father, with his mother surviving. He is survived by his children, Leigh Brewster Charron (Jacob), Reston, VA and Meghan Brewster, Cincinnati, OH; his siblings Thomas Brewster, Binghamton, NY and Elizabeth “Libby” Brewster Hayes (Bartlett), Winston-Salem, NC. Also surviving are his grandchildren Evelyn Charron and Quinn Charron.

Nick attended Binghamton Central High School and graduated from Seton Catholic Central High School where he played football. He attended Plymouth State College where he graduated with a degree in Business Administration. While living in New Hampshire, Nick acquired a life-long love of the New England mountains, served as a ski instructor at Loon Mountain and Waterville Valley, and drove a boat for the film crew of “On Golden Pond”. After college, Nick returned to Binghamton to become a Certified Insurance Counselor and start work at BAC Agency. He became the principal agent at BAC and served his customers’ personal and commercial interests until his retirement. Nick participated in many community and charitable organizations, including Key Club, Endwell Rotary Club, The Boys & Girls Club of Binghamton and Maine-Endwell Dollars for Scholars.

Throughout his life, Nick pursued his passion for sport and competition through skiing, golf, cycling, wind surfing, tennis and sailing. His first ski turns were made at Barry’s Hill at the age of two and he became a ski instructor at Innsbruck, USA by the age of sixteen. He served as a ski instructor and race coach at Greek Peak and was the head coach for the Greek Peak Ski Racing program for many years. He was instrumental in growing the program during his tenure and found great joy in helping families discover the wonders of skiing. During warm weather months, he could be found on the golf course with friends and enjoying the water with his children and grandchildren at his Silver Lake, PA, cottage.

Nick will be remembered for his exuberant personality – he was full of energy and always had a story to share. What he loved most in this world were his children. He loved watching them grow and coaching them to pursue their dreams. Nick’s ashes will be scattered at Silver Lake, PA, in a private family gathering. At the request of his children, in lieu of flowers, please consider donating to The Boys & Girls Club of Binghamton. <<



Marcia and Robert Cathey

PSIA has lost two devoted members with the passing of Marcia Cathey, age 85 and her husband Bob, age 89. As much as they loved yard and garden work, when temps dipped, their lives were all about teaching skiing. They met on a Winter Park T-bar and Marcia wrote to her parents to report that she had met a nice guy, but he wasn’t much of a skier. Bob might have begged to differ as he had already earned a patch for skiing in 40 below zero while in the Air Force in Alaska. After marriage, they dabbled in teaching even before joining PSIA. As certified Level 2 instructors, they taught at Wachusett Mountain, Sunday River, and Gunstock. In nearly 60 years together they never tired of skiing, training, and delivering exceptional lessons to students. They were both masters at helping struggling and timid skiers advance to the next level. Marcia and Bob passed on their love of skiing to their sons Peter, on the National Ski Patrol and Sam, a Level 3 instructor. They loved being part of a snowsports school and truly enjoyed the many lasting friendships they made during their decades in PSIA. <<



Janice Burns

A celebration of her life was on Thursday September 8, 2022.

Janice Burns of Champion, Pennsylvania, formerly Donora died Tuesday, August 31, 2022, at the age of 79. She was born on August 31, 1943, in Donora. She was preceded in death by her loving husband and soul mate of 50 years, Stephen E. Burns. Loved by so many, Janice will be deeply missed by her family and friends. A loving and devoted wife, daughter, sister, aunt, and friend who has touched so many lives, Janice’s legacy lives on through her loved ones, who will always love and cherish her dearly.

She graduated from Donora High School in 1961, where she was a cheerleader. She graduated from California University of Pennsylvania (California State Teachers College) with a bachelor’s degree of science in education. Janice was a speech language pathologist at the Pittsburgh Allegheny Intermediate Unit for 35 years.

Janice was an avid skier for 50 years. Janice and her husband Steve were a well-known presence in the Seven Springs community. She was a ski instructor at Seven Springs and taught many students, friends, and family how to ski, passing on her love of skiing to so many people. She was a certified Level II with the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA). She and Steve were frequent participants in the December ITC/Snow Pro Jam course! She and Steve were responsible for training many ski instructors through the Learn To Be A Ski Instructor Program at Seven Springs, giving them a love of teaching skiing! She was an active member of the Mon Valley Ski Club. She held many offices; she was most noted for being membership chairman and an anonymous stalwart behind the scenes leader of the club. She was a devoted Pitt fan and season ticket holder for over 50 years and was a member of the Golden Panthers. Janice and Steve were former members of Mon Valley Country Club.

Janice is survived by her brothers, Robert Kelly of Upper St. Clair, PA and Tom Kelly and wife Maggi of Ponte Vedra, FL; brother-in-law Edward Burns and wife, Ginny of Monessen, PA as well as multiple nieces and nephews.

She was so appreciative of the special friends and relatives who were there for her for all the caring, kindness, and love. A special thank you to Jane and Russ Stull, Barb and Bob Howe and her nurses and caregivers at Excelsa Health.

Janice will be remembered for her warmth, caring, thoughtfulness and generosity, always making people smile with kind words, exceptional stories, and her shining personality. She lived her life with grace and love. She was a true caregiver and impacted the lives of so many people—making everything she did, every place she went and everything she touched better. <<

In Memoriam



Karlis V. Kopans

Karlis Vilis Kopans was born in 1953, in New Jersey, to Nadija Zutis and Arnolds Kopans, originally of Latvia, who met through the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of New

York. He passed away peacefully on July 9, 2022, surrounded by his family at his home in Yorktown Heights, NY.

Karl grew up in Elizabeth, NJ, attending school and playing football, including winning a State Championship. He was also an active member of the Boy Scouts of America, eventually receiving his Eagle Scout badge.

In addition to attending the NJ Latvian School and participating in various Latvian folk dance groups, he attended the Latvian Camp in the Catskills throughout his youth. Later on, he would join the Lauka Ipasuma Komiteja of the camp, following in his father's footsteps to maintain the

camp's plumbing (among many other things), and receiving several awards recognizing his service to the camp and the congregation. Karlis was also a member of the Latvian fraternity Beveronija.

He attended NJIT, earning a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and a M.S. in Management Engineering. While at college, he became a member of the Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity, and remained an active alumni member throughout his life. Karl retired from New Jersey Transit to become a full-time Dad, where he was extremely active in his children's various interests - especially his daughter's Synchronized Ice Skating, for which he spent countless hours in rinks, eventually seeing her represent the United States in international competitions.

Karl loved the outdoors, especially on canoe and ski trips with his friends. After finding a love of Nordic skiing at Mountain Trails Cross Country Ski Area near Hunter, NY, he became a member of the National Ski Patrol (NSP) and Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA), of which he

remained an alumni member. He was extremely active in both organizations, leading 3 "Nordicfests" at Mountain Trails and receiving several awards for outstanding service.

Karl also served for 23 years as an Area Rep for PSIA-AASI E and Mountain Trails to help improve the lines of communication between PSIA-AASI and the ski area and disseminate information to the membership. His loyal and dedicated service to Area Rep Program has been greatly appreciated.

His time spent in the mountains also led him to meet his wife, Jeannie. They married in 1986, moving to Yorktown Heights, NY to raise their children, and recently spending the colder months in Wimauma, FL.

Karl is survived by his wife, Jean-Marie; son, Janis; daughter, Kristina; daughter-in-law Greta; and grandsons Nathan and Ryan.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of New York - Camp. <<



William J. "Honk" Giese, Jr.

William J. "Honk" Giese, Jr., age 69, of Harborcreek, a long-time resident of Brevillier Village, passed away Saturday, May 28, 2022 due to a long, extended illness. He was born in Des Moines, IA on November 8, 1952, son of the late Dr. William J. Giese Sr. and Charlene Giese.

Bill started out as a Ski instructor in the early/mid-seventies and through the years became the Ski School Director for numerous years at Peek'n Peak Resort in New York and Angel Fire Resort in New Mexico. Everyone who knew Bill (HONK) could see his passion for skiing and teaching those skills to the everyday public. Bill was also well-known and active with the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) as a fully certified instructor and Area Ski School Director. He was an avid runner and completed many marathons. He also enjoyed weightlifting, bicycling, mountain biking, and in-line skating. He was a genuinely selfless individual who went out of his

way to bring smiles and laughter into the lives of those around him. During the summer, Bill also worked as a gardener for Peek'n Peak.

Bill is survived by his loving and dedicated wife of 38 years, Jean Giese; his two daughters, Larissa and Shelby Giese; his sister, Pamela Giese (Sherm) and three brothers, Dr. Jeffrey Giese, Dr. Mark Giese (Jeannie) and Tim Giese (Debbie); as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program, Holiday Valley Resort, PO Box 370, Ellicottville, NY 14731. Condolences may be sent to www.dusckasfuneralhome.com.

From Tim Giese:

PSIA, Peek'n Peak and Friends

Just to inform you of the passing of William (Bill) (HONK) Giese on Saturday 5/28/2022

To those who knew Bill, it has been 26 years since the car accident that took his active life away from him. Since then, he lived in numerous nursing homes and finally called Beveller Village in Harborcreek, PA his home.

Thank You to the Peek'n Peak Family and PSIA through the years for the thoughts and support that were given to Bill and his family. I personally cannot think of a PSIA update clinic where I was not asked how Bill was doing. <<



Mark A. Plaat

On May 13th, Mark A. Plaat, loving husband of Nancy and father of two, Louis and Daniel passed away at the age of 72.

Mark was born on May 8, 1950 along with his twin sister Tina, in Bronx NY to Shirley and Julius Plaat. After receiving degrees from SUNY Albany in Environmental Sciences and RPI in Urban Planning, he settled in the Great Northeast.

He was a member of PSIA and an active ski instructor at Jiminy Peak Resort in Hancock, MA for more than 20 years. He attended countless PSIA workshops throughout the Northeast and made lifelong friends in the process.

His claim to fame was teaching starlet Vanessa Williams to ski at Jiminy Peak and getting a sizable tip for his expertise. He also listened to RPI Bluegrass on the way to the mountain every week and already had on his ski pants to be ready for the slopes upon arrival. Mark had a passion for skiing, but also enjoyed homebrewing beer and wine which he shared with colleagues and friends at the mountain after just about every final lineup.

In addition, he was a charter member and President of PYE (Preserve Your Environment) in the 70's, an advocate for Save the Pine Bush and a leader of the Albany Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Mark was blessed with four beautiful granddaughters, Adelaide, Ellanora, Seraphina, and Rosetta, two of whom are already skiing at Jiminy Peak with their dad and uncle which brightened Mark's heart in carrying on this family tradition.

Donations in Mark's memory may be made to the Project STRIDE Program at Jiminy Peak Resort in Hancock MA. <<

AASI Update

By Brian Donovan

AASI-E Coordinator and Examiner

PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Team

Greetings AASI East Community! Not to get all *Game of Thrones* on you, but “Winter Is Coming!” This is always my favorite time of year as the seasons change, social media starts to become consumed with pictures of snow-covered mountains, snow guns blowing, and pictures of people sliding down mountains. The anticipation of the upcoming winter season is right around the corner, and it is no doubt going to be a fun one! As always, I’m here to give you my insider insight into the 2022-2023 AASI East Event Schedule and some other tips to help you make the most of your membership this year!

Here’s some helpful advice to help you navigate this upcoming winter:

1. Check out the 2022-2023 AASI-E Event Schedule to find an event that helps you with your personal and professional development this season!
 - a. AASI Pro Jam is back and growing in numbers each season! This amazing 5-day early season event at Killington in December is here to help scratch your early season snowboard itch! This 5-day mega event has tons to offer with plenty of snowboarding, movie nights, dinners, banquets, member official suppliers, cocktail hours, and much, much more! Don’t hesitate. Round up a few friends and make this the season you attend Pro Jam! Every year we’re growing in size. Let’s make the 2022 Pro Jam the biggest Snowboard Pro Jam ever!
 - b. Help instructors in your Ski/Ride School find a Level 1 experience that will be a lifetime memory for them. Help them to look deeply at the Event Schedule and to sign up for a Level 1 Exam at an amazing resort that fits in with their available time and budget. Help them to resist the urge to sign up for a Level 1 Assessment at their home mountain, and instead take advantage of the free 2-day lift tickets at a different mountain to bolster their Level 1 experience! There are dozens of Level 1 Assessments spread out throughout the entire Eastern Region from Maine to Tennessee. Help your fellow instructors step out of their normal comfort zone of the home mountain, meet new friends and experience a new and different resort.
 - c. **HALFPIPE CAMP** at Okemo is making a later appearance this upcoming season. Mother Nature has prevented the halfpipe from being ready in time for Halfpipe Camp the past few seasons. In order to give Ma Nature plenty of time to provide a superb venue for this popular event, we’ve pushed halfpipe camp back later in the season to guarantee that the pipe will be cut and ready for us. Sign up early to reserve a spot in Halfpipe Camp at Okemo March 2-3, 2023.
 - d. 40 and Older Snowboard Update Events – New this season, we’re offering specific update events on the AASI-E Event Schedule targeted at members aged 40+ who aren’t trying to attend a Level 2 or 3 Assessment Prep or who just want to connect with other members their age. You asked for these events in your member feedback, and we’re happy to offer them! Sign up for one today!
 - e. There is a 5-day Level 2 College in December at Killington where days 1 & 2 are a Level 2 Assessment Prep and days 3-5 are a Level 2 Assessment. This event is aimed at members who want to hit the ground running this season with a chance at a Level 2 Certification. Use the first two days to familiarize yourself with the terrain you’ll be assessed on, knock the mental and physical rust off your teaching and riding, and show your stuff at an early-season Level 2 Assessment.

- f. We’re hosting an Intro to Splitboarding Camp at The Hermitage Club in Vermont in February. This event will be focused on in-bounds splitboarding techniques, tactics, and exploration at a privately owned mountain in Southern Vermont with minimal crowds and traffic on the trails. Come prepared to earn your turns and learn some new skills on your splitboard.
 - g. We’re trying out a new location for the annual Freestyle Camps. Killington, VT has really upped their freestyle terrain game over the past few seasons; they were named as the *Best Terrain Park in the East* by *Snowboarder Magazine* in 2020. We’re going to host our Freestyle Camps at Killington as we explore all the freestyle progression that the Woodward Parks at Killington have to offer. Killington brags that, “The parks include everything from hike-accessible learning zones at our base areas, to large freestyle zones and everything in between. Through an artfully constructed, progression-based design, the Woodward Mountain Park guides athletes through an evolutionary journey that is ultimately controlled by their own personal goals and individual style.” We offer camps for members based on your experience and comfort levels, and the different groups will spend time exploring the parks that make the most sense for your progression and comfort.
2. Do you know about all the amazing Member Pro Offers and discounts on gear that you’re eligible for? Don’t spend any more of your hard-earned money than you have to by taking advantage of the member discounts that you earn through your PSIA-AASI membership. Visit your account at www.thesnowpros.org and check out the deep discounts available to you in the Pro Offers section.
 - a. **Remember: Follow the rules and maintain proper etiquette!!**
 - i. Don’t share your Pro Offer discounts with friends and family unless the rules specifically state that you are allowed to do so. Ignoring this rule is the easiest way to lose these discounts.
 - ii. Don’t go to retail stores to try stuff on and make more work for the staff in that store or leave the store a mess.
 - iii. Don’t brag to retail employees about how you’re going to use your Pro Offers to get a better deal online.
 3. Don’t let the new words confuse you! As we evolve as an organization into the new PSIA-AASI National Standards for certification and alignment across the country, you’ll start to hear and see a change in language when it comes to what we used to call Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 “Exams.” Instead, you’ll see the new names for these events as Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 “Assessments.” It’s just a change in wording, but the events are still what you’re looking for. If you plan to set your sights on earning a new level of certification this season, make sure you look at all of the Assessments we have on the AASI-E Event Schedule. We’re offering more opportunities to take your Level 2 or Level 3 Assessment than ever before!
 - a. Level 2 Assessments this season:
 - i. Killington, VT in December
 - ii. Hunter, NY in January
 - iii. Snowshoe, WV in February
 - iv. Holiday Valley, NY in February
 - v. Blue Mountain, PA in February
 - vi. Killington, VT in March
 - b. Level 3 Assessments this season:
 - i. Killington, VT in January
 - ii. Killington, VT in March
 4. Have you taken the free E-Learning courses offered through the National website at www.thesnowpros.org? Log in to your account. Select the

E-Learning tab in the top menu. Log in again. And then check out the list of E-Learning and Webinars available to you. Jump in and explore these added benefits to your membership!

5. Calling all snowboard resort trainers!!! Did you know?? If you are a trainer at your home mountain, you can shadow a member of the AASI-E Education Staff running 1 event per season. Contact Melissa Skinner in the PSIA-AASI Eastern Office to inquire about opportunities to shadow an event and become a better trainer for your staff. Shadow opportunities are: 1. Limited to Level 1 Assessments, Level 2 and Level 3 Assessment Prep events, and pre-requisite events. 2. Available if a member of the AASI-E Ed Staff is not already understudying the event. 3. Available if the event is equal to or below your own certification level. *All shadow opportunities must be approved by the Eastern office staff. **Members are not permitted to shadow Level 2 and Level 3 Assessments. ***Shadowing an event does not count for education credits. – Think of it as an unpaid internship where knowledge and snowboarding are your rewards.

6. Have you ever thought about writing an article for the SnowPro publication? We're always looking for new and fresh authors to submit ideas, experiences, and concepts that might help other AASI members to grow and learn. This is meant to be a place developed and supported by our entire community. You don't have to be an English Writing major to submit. We have a team that will help you edit down your content and get it ready to publish. Your original material should be sent to "SnowPro Editor" at: psia-e@psia-e.org as an MS Word document attachment. So, get writing! I can't wait to read it!

As I finish out this AASI Update, I want to give a huge thank you to all of you for all the lessons you're going to teach this winter! Thank you for all the lives you're going to change! Bring your A-Game every day that you're at the resort this winter and help people fall in love with snowboarding! Connect with your students and teach them more than simply how to slide on snow. Teach them to be part of the snowboard industry. Teach them why you love what you do! Be the reason why hundreds of new people fall in love with this sport that connects all of us! – BD <<

continued on next page >>

*A bad day on the slopes
beats a good day at work.*

Locally Grown.....Globally Known



Location:

Snow Creek Mountain Sports
52 Silver Creek Rd
Snowshoe, WV

Contact:

Greg Hoffmann
hoffmann.greg@gmail.com
802-379-1014

Ski boot sales, modifications, stance
balancing, ski school presentations

Weighing the Snowboard Dev Team Tryout?

By Todd Ainsworth

AASI-E Examiner

AASI-E Dev Team and ATP Coach

It's the time of year again when AASI-E has published the calendar of educational events and assessments. This article is for those of you who circled the AASI Development Team Tryout on March 8-9 – particularly those who are undecided if the Development Team is for you.

Dev Team is considered part of the AASI-E Educational Staff. In fact, the Dev Team members are the future of our Ed Staff. Dev Team members attend annual trainings and understudy assessment and educational events led by our veteran Ed Staff members.

First, when you go to the tryout, keep in mind that it's exactly that – a tryout. It is not a Level 4 certification assessment. The difference between certification assessment exams and a Dev Team tryout is that anyone who meets the standard at a certification exam passes. At a tryout, everyone meets the standard as a prerequisite. But only the best candidates make the team. Ask anyone who has attended a tryout in the past: everyone is qualified; not everyone gets selected.

Second, this is a three-day job interview. You may be a staff trainer, lead trainer, training manager, supervisor, coach for seasonal programs, et cetera. All of your other fellow level 3 instructors will share these things with you. Your challenge at the tryout is to stand out against such a skilled and talented crowd. How do you demonstrate that you are the best qualified for the job? You have seen examiners on the job – they facilitate exams and a wide range of non-assessment events; they deliver good news and bad news to candidates; they build group dynamics at events with people who have never met, who come from diverse backgrounds, and who bring different needs and expectations; and they work late into evenings on exam days getting scores out. Your challenge at the Dev Team tryout: showing us that you can do these things and want these things.

Third, despite the competitive nature of this job interview, you need demonstrate great People skills as you contribute to building a positive environment within the tryout. Being the best rider while

simultaneously shooting down fellow candidates in conversation will not get you far.

So finally, after reading the above, if you still feel this is the job for you, and the tryout process sounds like a format in which you might thrive, we look forward to seeing you in March. If you are in two minds about the tryout and the commitment, you might think about continuing to build skills and confidence – we generally hold the tryout every two years if not more frequently. There's a great opportunity to gauge your readiness or interest at the Dev Team preparation event being held at Killington, VT in Vermont from Dec. 10-11. As you prepare or consider your interest, please understand that our selectors know many of the candidates, and they take great care in their decision-making.

We are excited to see those who show up to the tryouts this season, and hopefully the above helps put some reality into the tryout and helps shape your training this season. ☀

Sometimes We Have to Slow Down for Success

By Eric Wright

AASI-E Examiner

Loon Mountain Resort, NH

As most of you probably know, after a few years of instructing you end up with a few stories of successes and failures of your students, and yourself as a teacher. The lessons learned in these scenarios are the ones we seem to take with us and the ones that mold us into better instructors. I'm going to share a brief story of this very nature about a student we'll call fast Eddie.

When I meet a new guest for a lesson, I often start with a warm up that allows me to make an assessment of their riding. In the case of fast Eddie, this was the whole run! I mean this guy took off and just ripped it down the hill! It was all I could do to keep up; jacket flapping speeds made me feel like a rebel in my uniform, but I was doing my job – I guess. When we were at the bottom and were able to talk, we went over his initial goals of technique and smoother riding, I told him the first step to learning anything new is slowing down! After embracing this idea and a few more lessons, he even dipped into some bumps and quickly could feel the effect of board control instead of relying on speed to stay balanced.

My first lesson learned was be clear in my communication. I had randomly told fast Eddie to just make a few turns so I could watch his riding. To him a few turns was a run. I could have been clearer, and given him a specific place to stop, so we didn't waste valuable hill time in an expensive lesson. This idea, although basic, is really important! Private lessons can be valued not by dollars per hour but dollars per minute. He could have made that run without me blazing behind him. What we offer is the teaching part, so clear communication leads to the best value and outcome for each student.

The second lesson and the one that has really stuck with me was how much his riding changed and progressed once he slowed down. Now don't

misunderstand, I am not talking about teaching every lesson in the beginner area or at extremely slow speeds, but slowing down enough for new movements to develop will make a big difference for your student(s). I will never forget just having fast Eddie stand there on the flat, with all that fast potential; I watched him twist and bend his board, and really start to understand how it works. Not only was that the beginning of a change in his riding, I learned to recognize that seemingly simple movements were key to his understanding and progress and we were on the flats!

I have reduced this lesson I learned while working with fast Eddie to an overall concept I apply while teaching students of all ability levels. There is a fine line between understanding a riding concept or movement pattern, and doing it. Often, speed is the tipping point. A basic carve is a good example, too slow and the balance is more challenging, too fast and fear is more likely to prevent performance. Let's use the static, simple, complex, free ride idea and convert it to speeds, for example, stopped, slow, faster, and at speed or fast. While working with students, I like to think about it like a checklist. We start with a static movement to understand how and when the joints are moving. Then we start to apply it at slow speed and as long as the movement remains present, we can check slow off the list. As we start to move faster, it is very important to notice at what speed your student starts to lose the new movement pattern. This is the fine line we need to understand as instructors: when to slow down, so students don't lose valuable learning opportunities. Keeping it fun and challenging with clear communication promotes a good learning environment and it's always worth the time it takes to slow down a bit and focus on a successful progression. ☀

AASI-E Education Staff Development Team Tryout in 2023

By Brian Donovan

AASI-E Coordinator and Examiner

PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Team

We are continuously seeking talented, passionate, and inspirational AASI members to join the AASI-E Education Staff. We will be hosting an AASI-E Development (“Dev”) Team Tryout in the spring of 2021 at Stowe, Vermont. The 3-day tryout process will be open to any AASI Level 3 certified instructor in good standing. This is a prime opportunity for candidates to display their talents and potentially be selected as part of the AASI-E Education Staff. Before you commit to the tryout, there are some important things you should note:

1. You should be an inspiring instructor, clinician, rider and AASI member! This should go without saying. You should already be a leader within your own Ski/Ride School. You should want to share your knowledge and experience with others as we all strive to continuously improve our snowboarding skills and ability to teach others.
2. You should be familiarizing yourself with the new PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Standards, Snowboarding Fundamentals, and Performance Guide. As we evolve our educational models, you should be familiarizing yourself with this content and embody it in your teaching and clinics.
3. You should know that this is a job and a large time commitment. You should have availability to be on snow. Development Team members should plan to be available for at least 10-20 days of on snow training and understudies (where you shadow an Examiner running an event/assessment) per season while they're on the Dev Team. We want to be upfront with you on this commitment, because this is the expectation on the back end if you were selected to the Staff.
4. You should love to travel... on a budget. The Eastern Region is enormous! We host events in over a dozen states from Maine to Tennessee. If you are selected to the Development Team, you should be prepared to visit lots of new resorts, put lots of mileage on your vehicle, and be comfortable sleeping on a couch or a floor from time to time.
5. Speaking of vehicles – You should have a reliable form of transportation. You'll want to ensure that you're able to safely and reliably travel to all of these new resorts you'll be visiting.
6. Making the Development Team is like winning the lottery – if the lottery paid out its winnings in education and knowledge, instead of currency you can spend. Quality coaching, knowledge, and improving your skills through understudy opportunities is the compensation you will receive. Being on the Dev Team is very similar to an unpaid internship, and most of your time spent on the Dev Team doesn't come with a paycheck... to start.
7. The AASI-E Development Team is not AASI Level 4. The Development Team Tryout is a **JOB INTERVIEW** for a position as part of a travelling snowboard school for instructors. You should know this coming in. At the Dev Team Tryout, you will be spending 3 days and evenings teaching, riding, running clinics, giving indoor presentations, sitting through interviews, and displaying to the selection committee what qualities and skills you bring to the table that would benefit the membership of the AASI-E community. The selection committee will be looking for talented individuals that can become the AASI-E Examiners of the future.
8. The timeline from Dev Team tryout to becoming an Examiner typically looks like this:
 - a. You are selected to become a Dev Team member at a competitive tryout! Heck yes! Nice job!
 - b. You spend 2-4 years on the Development Team training to become a

better clinician, rider, coach, and instructor. You will write articles for the SnowPro. You will understudy other Education Staff members running clinics and exams. You will attend annual training sessions and contribute to Education Staff conversations, homework assignments, and production of content for the membership. You will have your performance and development annually assessed by the AASI-E Teams Coach and Steering Committee.

- c. If the AASI-E Steering Committee feels that you are developing the skills to become an Examiner, you will be elevated to Examiner and placed into the Advanced Training Program (ATP) for continued training. You will typically spend 2-4 years in the ATP attending annual trainings, writing articles, contributing positively to the AASI-E Education Staff and community, running education events, running Level 1 Exams, and learning how to run and score Level 2 and Level 3 Exams. You will have your performance and development annually assessed by the AASI-E Teams Coach and Steering Committee.
- d. If the AASI-E Steering Committee feels confident in your development and ability to run Exams, you will be elevated to full AASI-E Examiner status and can continue to work on your skills for running Level 2 and Level 3 Assessments and clinics. Once you are an Examiner, you will continue to attend annual trainings, contribute to the AASI-E community and Education staff, and run educational clinics and Exams. The AASI Examiner Coach and Steering Committee will annually review your performance.

If you're still reading and you're still interested, check out the AASI-E Event Schedule. There is an official AASI-E Development Team Tryout at Killington in March.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all there! Let me know what questions you might have. – BD <<

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SNOW
Pro

Upcoming SnowPro Copy Deadlines

If you are submitting articles, information or ads for the *SnowPro*

January 6, 2023 for the winter issue.

Writing Guidelines

General member submissions should not exceed 1,000 words and should be e-mailed to psia-e@psia-e.org as a MS Word document.

Please see additional guidelines on page 2 of this issue under General Information.

Thank you! <<

Encouraging Coworkers to Take Their Level I This Season? Stop Everything and Read This!

By Tony Bailey

AASI-E Examiner

Stratton Mountain Resort, VT

Okay, maybe the headline was extreme but now that I've got your attention, take note: PSIA-AASI has changed our exam process to reflect our national standards which were rewritten to incorporate the Learning Connection model. As you encourage colleagues to go for their Snowboard Level I, here's what they can expect.

It's an Assessment.

Don't let anyone tell you differently; the Level 1 Assessment is just that, an "assessment." An AASI Examiner will be assessing to the Level 1 standard. Some candidates will be successful, and some will not. The Education Staff member will still do everything they can to create a fun and warm welcome, but at the end of the day their job is to assess and hopefully hand out shiny bronze pins.

Level I Resources

There are fantastic resources on the National website with all the information a Level 1 candidate needs to be successful. (Think about it like a cheat sheet for a test where all the answers are spelled out – except in this case the cheat sheet is totally legal.)

Here's the link: thesnowpros.org/certification/national-certification-standards. At this site you will find:

1. Snowboard Certification Standards (Pages 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17 apply to Level I)
2. Snowboard Technical Skills Performance Guide (Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 apply to Level I – and I recommend really being familiar with page 3)
3. Teaching Skills Performance Guide (Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 apply to Level I)
4. People Skills Performance Guide (Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 apply to Level I)
5. Also, find the Snowboard Technical Manual and the Teaching Snowsports manual at shop.thesnowpros.org/snowboard-1. Note: the digital versions of these resources are FREE to AASI members.

Here to Help

Does this still feel like a lot? Well, encourage your aspiring Level I candidates to know, understand, and practice their Fundamentals (see below).

Snowboard Technical Fundamentals

- Control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the board
- Control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support to direct pressure across the width of the board.
- Control the magnitude of pressure created through the board/surface interaction.
- Control the board's pivot through flexion/extension and rotation of the body.
- Control the board's tilt through a combination of inclination and angulation.
- Control the twist (torsional flex) of the board using flexion/extension and rotation of the body.

Teaching Skills Fundamentals

- Collaborate on long-term goals and short-term objectives.
- Manage information, activities, terrain selection, and pacing.
- Promote play, experimentation, and exploration.
- Facilitate the learner's ability to reflect upon experiences and sensations.
- Adapt to the changing needs of the learner.
- Manage emotional and physical risk.

People Skills Fundamentals

- Develop relationships based on trust.
- Engage in meaningful, two-way communication.
- Identify, understand, and manage your emotions and actions.
- Recognize and influence the behaviors, motivations, and emotions of others.

The Final Piece

Alright, fancy book learnin' aside, there's one more piece to encourage aspiring Level I candidates to practice before they go to their Level 1 Assessment: time in front of students teaching them how to snowboard. Throughout the two-day assessment Ed Staff members will ask candidates to reflect on their lesson experiences and share them with the group. They may be asked to teach a mock lesson based on a situation they are likely to encounter teaching beginner/novice lessons. For example, what would the candidate do with a student who can't traverse but can only sideslip? How would the candidate teach the student to progress from sideslip to traverse?

You, our members, are inspirations to your newer colleagues. As you encourage them to go for their Level I certification, keep in mind this equation: Ownership of the Fundamentals (Technical, Teaching, and People skills) PLUS Teaching experience PLUS great attitudes and open-mindedness EQUAL shiny bronze pin, high-fives, and new friends in the industry! ⬅

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AmazonSmile is available by going to www.psia-e.org/smile and may be activated in the Amazon Shopping app.

your turn

This section is an opportunity for member's voices to be heard. Opinions expressed may not reflect the views of PSIA-AASI or all of its members.

Confessions of a Bad AASI Mom: COVID edition

By Holly Anne Andersen
AASI-E Examiner and
Adaptive Examiner
Mount Snow, VT and Bart Center at
Bromley Mountain, VT



Holly Andersen

I acknowledge my privilege and am grateful for it. There are no bombs being dropped over me; I am not a refugee. I have a roof over my head, clean water, and food to eat while millions do not. I am white in Vermont. Even the bizarre feelings I have had about COVID are themselves a sign of my privilege. I write, however, to provide comfort and love to others who feel slightly broken and definitely not themselves since March 2020.

Everyone remembers March 2020 fondly (please insert sarcastic tone). In retrospect, I am grateful for the lock downs and the closings, for reasons aside from the obvious. There were shining brilliant moments that the lockdown made possible. My family spent more time outside, spent more time together, spent less money on dinosaur juice on travel, and cooked homemade meals. At the time, however, it was surreal and terrifying. The days were filled watching the world shut down: sporting events, highly anticipated family events, and alas, the Bad Moms half-pipe event at Okemo. We watched freezer trucks head to NYC to aid in storage for the hospitals and the thought that my family could be next was omnipresent. As the mother of a child with asthma (think nighttime steam baths, not being able to have a wood stove, and collections of inhalers), I would

have never imagined that a trip to the grocery store could endanger my family's lives.

Having Leslie Knope as my spirit animal (Amy Poehler's character on "Parks and Recreation"), I vowed to use the time productively with my family. We built victory gardens (do not plant a whole bed of kale; you'll thank me later), produced artwork of all kinds, sewed, quilted, learned about chemistry – all things we should have been doing all along. We connected with friends and family via Zoom and participated in virtual learning. Summer activities revolved around cautiously optimistic activities like camping, hiking, swimming, fishing, and shooting. Then winter came.

Anticipating winter and its many unknowns, my Boy Scout planning skills kicked in. I stockpiled food that would not go bad. Filling kitchen cabinets turned into Tetris. At any given moment, lentils could fall and become a physical threat. I filled cans with backup gas for the generator, stockpiled games, puzzles, art supplies, shampoo, soap, and other necessities (not toilet paper, fabric napkins can work in a pinch). And wine. Lots of wine. I filled an entire closet with ammunition. We settled into the winter with two adults working from home and home-schooling two children. We spent the holidays at home—trying to keep spirits high. Until February. In February, we all collectively hit our threshold for trying to remain productive and positive. That is when we collectively had enough of hiking abandoned ski resorts to earn our turns, playing Monopoly, and all things puzzle-related. The small terrain park in our yard was no longer cutting it. Before this, we would ride a few hours at Bromley on Sunday afternoons when there were few people on the hill. Riding did not even provide joy. I was so worried that I would be hit and need surgery (been there) or my kids would get hurt and need surgery (done that), I was unable to enjoy my favorite activity. We never went inside a base lodge; I taught my kids that is what the woods are for. Life skills, right? I was determined to keep us out of base first aid or the ER. We did things I vowed never to do—both girls got TV's in their rooms. Both got iPhones. I went from dabbling in alcoholism to being a full-fledged member (not really but it certainly felt like it). Cereal became dinner more often than I like to admit.

The months moved in slow motion through each season until we were back to winter. My daughters

could not be fully vaccinated yet, and not knowing what variants would emerge, we hunkered down yet again. JIB and CAB got to go back to school four days a week with masks and the constant barrage of exposures, quarantines, and days off due to staff shortages. Holidays were spent alone, again. As Omicron peaked, it found its way into CAB's school and into our house. We all lived, and no one was disabled.

Not since I made my first turns on a board, have I snowboarded so little. Not the years I had shoulder surgeries, broken back, a hernia, gallbladder out, been pregnant. Never. The thought of losing either of my children, or having either of them be permanently affected by this virus provided a great deal of perspective and empathy. As much as JIB and CAB love coming to the bar at the main base lodge with us, as much as I LOVE jumping in pools fully clothed, playing cards against humanity games at events--none of those activities were worth the prospect of losing them. We have collectively vowed to never eat kale or lentils again. Ever.

I avoided my home mountain through COVID because of the virus and also because I had no excess energy to share. If we had met, pre-COVID, I likely would have hugged you hard enough to crack your back or made you spill your drink, whether I knew you or not. I love all my mountains and PSIA-AASI "framilies" (our snowsports friends become family). The few times I went riding at my home mountain I went as incognito as possible to avoid interactions. The amount of energy it took just to get ready, get there, get on the hill, and be exposed to the world was itself overwhelming. I did not have any more energy to pass on to the world outside of my own skin.

As we begin coming back together again, please kindly remember that we are all not the fun loving people we once were or imagined ourselves to be. That fact does not change how much we love our sport, our communities, and our family members. I may not get close enough to you to inflict bodily harm on you or spill your drink when next we meet. You're welcome. ☺

continued on next page **»**

Pronoun Usage in Snowsports Lessons

By Ryan Burrow, (He/Him, They/Them)

Alpine Level II, Snowboard Level I, Children's Specialist I
Kirkwood Resort, CA and Crotched Mountain, NH

And Kayla Keplinger, (She/Her)

Telemark Level I, Alpine Level I, Cross County Level I,
Children's Specialist I

Whitetail Resort, PA



Ryan Burrow



Kayla Keplinger

About two years ago, I was warming up with the students in my 10-week program. It was only week two, and we were still figuring out our class dynamic. One of the students – let's call them Sam – was acting out. To get their attention, I said, "Young lady, what exactly do you think you're doing?"

Sam turned around to me and angrily responded, "I'm not a lady!" Due to his bright pink gear and gender neutral name, I'd incorrectly assumed Sam was a girl. I immediately apologized, and made a point to never make that mistake again. Despite my work with the LGBTQ+ employee resource group at my day job, and all I've learned in my courses in Tufts Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Master's Program, that day, my biases got the better of me. Since then, I've tried to start my lessons by sharing my own pronouns, and asking guests how they'd like to be referred to during lessons. If I'm unsure, I try to stick to using their names to get their attention.

For some of us, the concept of pronouns is new. As with any new topic, this can create feelings of discomfort and fear of saying the wrong thing. We hope this article will help demystify why they're important as well as how to have conversations about them. In doing so, you can improve the guest experience by building trust and helping guests feel safe – all of them.

What are Pronouns?

We all exist and interact with others in our lives, and pronouns are simply one way in which we do that. A pronoun is any word that refers to one or more people without using their names such as she/her, they/them, or he/him. Note that "they" can be used as either a singular or plural pronoun: for example "my students are great; they are so well behaved." (plural), or "do you know where that guest went? They forgot their phone." (singular). In the same way that we share our name with others, so they can identify and talk about us, pronouns are an expression of who we are and how others see us. Different people self-identify using different pronouns. For example, co-author Kayla Keplinger likes to be referred to with she and her. Co-author Ryan Burrow uses he/him or they/them, and is okay with either being used. Finally, some people don't use any of the listed pronouns, and may share with you what they would like used, or simply prefer to be referred to by their name.

Through societal norms and tradition, we all make assumptions about another person's gender based on external factors including facial features, hair length, body composition, voice, and other criteria. Based on our perception, we then assume someone's gender and by extension, what pronouns to use for them. However, many people do not fall into some or all of the categories that we tend

to associate with their gender. For example, one common stereotype is that only girls like pink, or have long hair, but there are many men who love the color pink or who have long hair. There are people who do not identify as either a man or a woman, but may have characteristics that are more commonly associated with one gender than another. By allowing others to share their pronouns, you can identify them without making incorrect, sometimes harmful, assumptions about who they are. On top of that, from a practical standpoint, we and our guests are often completely covered by our outdoor gear. How can we make assumptions about someone we can't even see?

Why Use Pronouns?

One of the most important aspects in helping our guests develop a lifelong love for snowsports is ensuring they feel safe and comfortable. Most of us have heard of Maslow's needs, which outline fundamental building blocks to facilitate growth. One need is a sense of safety, which includes psychological safety. By making our guests feel safe around us, we foster a sense of trust which creates the opportunity to expand their comfort zones and improve skills.

You may ask yourself: "Well, my pronouns are obvious, why should I share them?" This is common and normal thinking. The problem is that it can perpetuate gender stereotypes and ideals that don't apply to everyone. At the end of the day, people can be whoever they want, and express themselves however they like, regardless of their gender. So, sharing your own pronouns when you meet new people has these significant impacts:

It signals that you respect and recognize gender identity as important. This can make them feel safer (queue Maslow's needs), and creates space for them to share their own pronouns. The unfortunate reality is that there are still many places with animosity, fear, and hatred towards members of the LGBTQ+ community. Sharing your pronouns signals that your lesson is a safe space where all are welcomed and included.

It can help to make the practice of sharing your pronouns a common interaction. This is important, because it doesn't put the pressure on transgender or nonbinary people to share their pronouns first, which can be difficult without knowing whether it is safe to do so.

It can start a conversation with other people who may not understand why sharing your pronouns is important, and it spreads awareness, making more spaces accessible for transgender and non-binary people.

How to Use Pronouns

There are a couple ways to incorporate pronoun use into your everyday experience, both on and off the slopes. You can add your pronouns to your email signatures, Zoom profiles, and business cards. If your resort allows it, consider adding them to your name tag – and, if they don't, maybe ask why not? You can share your pronouns when introducing yourself to a class. For example: "Hi, my name is Ryan Burrow. My pronouns are he/him or they/them, and I'll be your instructor today." Try making the space for guests to share their pronouns when introducing themselves too; for example, say, "Let's all go around and quickly introduce ourselves, and what we hope to learn today. If you feel comfortable, feel free to share the pronouns you would like used here today."

It's also important to understand that not everyone is comfortable sharing their pronouns – and they don't need to give you a reason either. If someone chooses not to share their pronouns, don't pressure or force them. Consider using the gender-neutral singular "they/them" as an alternative to making an assumption or listen for what others in their group may use. Another option is to simply refer to someone by their name, (for example, "Follow Kayla" instead of "Follow her"). This can also be clearer for your guests in some situations, particularly if you are in a large group.

Using someone's pronouns correctly boils down to respect. You wouldn't call someone by a name other than what they give you; likewise, you should use the pronouns they give. If you forget someone's pronouns, it is okay to politely ask what they are: "Apologies, could you remind me what pronouns you'd like me to use?" (Doing so repeatedly would be disrespectful, just as repeatedly forgetting someone's name would be.) Try your best to remember. It is also okay

to make a mistake: if you catch yourself, or if someone corrects you, correct your mistake promptly while not making a big deal about the situation. Drawing too much attention can create a more uncomfortable situation for the person involved. A simple way to address this situation: simply say, "Thank you for the correction." Then continue where you left off. It is very common for people who are new to this vernacular to use the wrong pronouns. But just like with snow-sports, intentional practice improves skills. Pro tip: if I catch myself using the wrong pronouns for someone, as soon as possible I say three sentences in my head describing that person with the correct pronouns. The brain quickly rewires the association.

The way society views gender has shifted. We hope this has served to clarify the modern usage of pronouns and that you'll consider some of these actions moving forward. At the end of the day, it's about doing your best to make a guest feel comfortable and safe, so they can learn to love the sport as much as you do. As snowsports pros, our job is to welcome all to winter and mountain life regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. The proper usage of pronouns will help create the inclusive environment towards which we strive.

Suggested Reading: *A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns*. Bongiovanni and Jimerson ☞

Every Experience Counts

By Donna Kaye D. Erwin
Alpine Level III, Cross Country
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Cannon Mountain, NH, Jackson XC,
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Donna Kaye Erwin

Every experience has value. For example, years ago, when I started my PSIA Nordic path, I was told that a certified Level III pro in one discipline could bypass a Level I exam in another discipline. As an alpine Level III, I decided not to do this in order to appreciate the complete educational process of getting certified in another discipline. I am glad I did. I found the Level I exam

very helpful in learning the expectations of another discipline. Even as a Level III alpine instructor, the cross-country Level I exam laid a valuable foundation for passing my Level II Nordic Track and Skate exam a few years later.

Over the years, I have come to consider my job as a professional ski instructor my primary career. I have served in many roles and held many titles (including children's alpine program director, alpine trainer, race league team captain, snowboard instructor, women's alpine program developer, retail and rental shop staffer, ski tester, sales team member, event promoter, and New England Ski Museum membership manager). My path has been rewarding. My career directions have been intentional. Yet, the outcomes have sometimes been unintentional. It's a journey in which I have a lot of pride, and every turn along the way has led me to where I am today.

For me, teaching people to make positive changes is addictive. Putting myself in students' boots and learning a new sport helped me identify with their experiences. I learned Nordic skiing as an adult. At first, my thinking was: "It's 'just' cross-country skiing - what is there to learn?" Before long, however, I was wishing for more skiing time to practice. I was feeling the excitement (and possible disappointment) of trying new equipment; I was wondering if the investment of time and money would pan out; I was questioning my level of fitness and preparedness. I experienced frustration when improvement didn't come as easily as I felt it should; I sometimes unfairly compared myself to others. Finally, I was concerned that I might injure myself – a feeling of less concern when I alpine ski. Our students experience all of these emotions – and so do we when we experience something new. I developed a personal routine that led me to success. Trying something new felt good, as did everything I learned through the process.

I enjoy goal-setting and the pursuit of quests. I can state confidently that I would not have a successful ski career without PSIA-AASI, its leaders, members, and educational opportunities. Fellow PSIA-AASI pros have encouraged and influenced me countless times. I've been inspired by people who shared similar personal goals and quests.

I have worked in 14 snowsports schools in four states and two countries – prompting more than a few comments (sometimes hurtful, I must admit) over the years about my inability to hold down a job in one place. Again, I would argue that the sum of one's experiences combine to bring a person to where they are today. I have learned in, and been inspired by, every place I have worked. A career highlight was after earning alpine Level III, I taught alpine and Nordic skiing in Australia for two incredible winters.

Will there be a cross-country Level III exam in my future? Anything is possible. Last winter, the

Eastern PSIA/AASI Scholarship Committee selected me as a recipient for the 3-day Cross Country Instructor Training Course at Bretton Woods, NH. This event can also be used as a Level I exam, and for me it gave me fresh focus, encouragement, and education. I encourage members to apply for these scholarships. Thank you, PSIA-AASI, for helping me to continually add to my professional quiver. It is wonderful to have an organization that believes in developing its members through continuing education and that offers financial assistance to help with this. ☞

Measuring Exercise Training

By Matt Lyerly
Alpine Level 2, Children's Specialist 1,
Freestyle Specialist 1
Massanutten Resort, VA



Matt Lyerly

Greetings Eastern Members, In the 2022 winter *Snow Pro*, I gave an overview of some of the scientific principles for alpine skiing fitness. To review, skiing utilizes forceful eccentric muscle action in the major muscles of the legs. That movement pattern is supported primarily by the anaerobic energy system. This source of energy is fast and powerful but short on stamina.

That being said, do you ever wonder how ANY athlete (like you, snow pro!) can measure training progress? Do terms like volume and intensity seem confusing? They really aren't! This article applies to anyone interested in getting fit so read on to learn more...

Let's talk about two kinds of exercise here; endurance exercise like running/cycling/swimming, and resistance training. Exercise volume is the total amount of work accomplished. With regard to endurance exercise, volume simply means the total distance covered. Let's say you are training for a marathon and decide to run 30 miles in a particular

continued on next page ☞

week. To keep numbers consistent, it's best to convert to the metric system, using meters in this instance. There are 1,600 meters (m) in one mile (mi) so...

$$30\text{mi} \times 1,600\text{m/mi} = 48,000\text{m training volume}$$

Instead of distance events, suppose you like to sling iron in the weight room and prefer resistance training. On the squat rack, you complete 5 sets of back squats for 5 repetitions at 100kg. Your volume calculation is as follows:

$$5\text{ sets} \times 5\text{ reps (25 so far...)} \times 100\text{kg} = 2,500\text{ total kg lifted}$$

See, I told you it was easy! Besides volume, the other main variable we look at is the intensity of exercise. There are several different ways to measure intensity. Internal variables measure those that happen within us, such as heart rate or blood lactate accumulation. External variables are a better measure of output. Let's consider the external output of our runner in the first example. Say you run 48,000m of weekly running and the total running time is five hours and 12 minutes. 312 total minutes, and 60 seconds per minute, so...

$$48,000\text{m} \div 312\text{minutes} \div 60\text{seconds/minute} = 2.56\text{m/second}$$

You ran a total of 48,000m at an average pace (intensity) of 2.56 meters per second. If you have a smartwatch that can measure your heart rate, that gives you an internal measure to go along with the external measure (speed) of intensity. Nice!

How about intensity of our weightlifting sesh? Let's say you have a one repetition maximum (1RM) of 110 kilograms (kg) on the back squat. If you lift 100kg per our example above, you are lifting 90 percent of the 1RM, so your intensity would be 0.9. It's important to note however, not all lifts in the gym are suitable for a 1RM assessment. Triceps extensions for example, are a small single-joint exercise which positions weight directly above the forehead. Not a great place to test one's absolute strength. So instead, we can measure intensity of the entire workout by calculating the total sets, reps, and weight lifted in that regimen to calculate an average resistance per rep. You perform the following lifts:

1. Back Squat: 5 sets x 5 reps x 100kg = 2,500kg
2. Triceps extension: 5 sets x 10 reps x 15kg = 750kg
3. Lunges with weight: 3 sets x 8 reps x 10kg = 240kg
4. Kettle bell swings: 3 sets x 15 reps x 20kg = 900kg

Total sets = 16

Total reps = 144

Total kg = 4,390

To calculate average resistance per rep, divide the total kg lifted (4,390) by total reps (144) and we get 30.5kg/rep. Now we have two ways to calculate intensity in the gym: as a percentage of 1RM which we use when appropriate and safe, and average resistance lifted per rep which can be used when percentage of 1RM isn't appropriate. Bravo!

Finally, you can calculate your total training effect over the period. This is a number that represents your total output and guess what, it's also easy to calculate! All you do is take your training volume and multiply by the intensity at which you were working. Going back to our running example, you completed 48,000m in one week at 2.56 m/sec on average. If you multiply these two together you get 122,880. This is an arbitrary number so let's give it an arbitrary name: GAINZ! You made 122,880 GAINZ from running in that week. Next week, suppose you run 41,500m but at a pace of 4m/sec. Less running volume but overall higher intensity. The total GAINZ for that week would be 41,500m x 4m/sec = 166,000, a higher overall training effect. For resistance training, there were 4,390 total kg lifted at an average resistance of 30.5kg/rep, so 4,390kg x 30.5kg/rep = 133,895.

Not bad, right? Stay tuned for the next article where I'll show you how to manipulate those variables to create a program specific to your goals. Welcome to GAINZville! <<

Should You Be Carv(ing)?

By Michael Breeden

Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 1

Snowshoe, WV



Michael Breeden

Are you getting all of the on-hill coaching that you want? Are your skiing skills improving as fast as you would like? If your answer is no, then maybe adding screen time to your training could be the solution. The digital ski coach Carv first came onto my radar early last season when a friend of mine purchased and began using Carv. We chatted about the feedback that he was getting from the device. I was blown away; Carv detected all the same things that I had noticed while watching him ski. I couldn't believe an insert in a ski boot and a couple

of wires could tell that he was rushing the top of his turn, or that he wasn't holding enough ankle tension throughout the turn. After our first conversation about the feedback, I immediately ordered Carv for myself. I had sustained a significant injury and knew I would need every possible tool to get myself back on track to take the Level III skiing exam later in the season.

Technology and electronics are increasingly at the forefront of outdoor sports: we have access to more ways than ever to see examples of good skiing and riding, have our own performance analyzed, and even get live virtual coaching – all from our smartphones. There are ski schools around the world and right here in the Eastern region that are beginning to utilize electronics in their in-person lessons. Some snowsports school programs record video of portions of the students' lessons and make the recordings available to students for later review and analysis with their teachers. Some schools, such as Aspen, even combine a conventional lesson with CARV analysis so that students can see how instruction can change their performance.

Carv collects data using inserts worn inside the ski boot track foot movements and pressures while skiing. Through the data they collect and a phone app, Carv analyzes your turns against millions of other turns including those made by National Team members, and other top tier skiers from around the world. The app provides prescriptive feedback and analysis in line with current PSIA doctrine to help get you to the next level (for example, from intermediate to expert). It can give you real-time turn-by-turn auditory scores through headphones for individual metrics like fore-aft balance, or edge angle among others.

When I returned from my injury, I was impressed at how much my friend's skiing had improved in just a couple of weekends of using the Carv app. His skiing was smoother; his turns were rounder; he had more progressive edging and pressuring movements; and he had higher ski performance. In short, he was skiing like an expert. I, on the other hand, was struggling to regain my pre-injury performance. The Carv app told me my injured side was lacking performance – I wasn't pressuring that side, I had lower edge angles, and wasn't steering the ski as well. I was a mess! As I regained my strength and conquered my fear, my scores improved. Carv gave me reassurance that not only did I feel better, but my skiing was actually improving too. As my turns slowly became more symmetrical, I could start to work on improving beyond my pre-injury proficiency. Through the data and feedback, I better understood the advice that had been given to me by coaches over the years. I could check my perceptions against real data that I couldn't argue with.

I have been skiing with Carv over two seasons. I believe it helped me to develop my technique, recover from my injury faster, and have success in my skiing exam last spring. It doesn't replace a live coach, but it has been an amazing tool.

This season I have been working directly for CARV as a virtual coach. Using student-submitted video and their CARV data, I coach skiers from all over the world. Their Carv metrics give me information from all of the runs that they recorded. I can see trends in their scores and their strengths and weaknesses. My job as coach becomes helping them to improve their scored metrics, and thereby their skiing. It's different from in-person coaching, but I see improvement in their scores and performance.

To the soul riders out there that come to the mountains to unplug and get away from screen time: I completely understand that you want to experience the outdoors in a pure way without any electronics. However, as skiing pros, I believe it is in our best interest and that of our students to use all of the tools that are available to us, not only to become better skiers, but also so that we stay familiar with what our students may be using when they aren't with us. We pride ourselves on being able to meet our students where they are, and in Spring 2022, they are racing toward the future. ☞

Ski More, Talk Less

By Len Black
Alpine Level I, Children's Specialist 1
Stratton Mountain, VT



Len Black, his group, and his microphone

I'm riding up the lift with several of my 5-to-9-year-old students. One boy asks the question I've been expecting: "Coach Len, why do you talk with a speaker?" Another chimes in: "Why does your voice sound funny?" I replied that I no longer have a voice box due to cancer. "Oh," they said, accepting the explanation. After all, they were there to ski and have fun.

Just like me.

In February 2020, I was diagnosed with Stage IV Cancer in the form of two tumors on my vocal cords. Prior to the diagnosis my voice had become progressively hoarse, and my students were having difficulty hearing me. Anyone who teaches knows how important voice projection is, especially in windy conditions.

In March 2020, I underwent a total Laryngectomy. As a result, I now breathe through a stoma (a hole in my neck). Fortunately, I did not need chemo or

radiation therapy as the physicians did a phenomenal job removing the cancer. I expressed to my doctors my greatest concern: would I be able to ski again? The answer was yes; therefore, this became my goal.

In 2021 I decided not to teach, but I did ski. I had to learn how to handle cold air entering my stoma with my neck, mouth and nose covered with a mask. Fast forward to the fall of 2021: thanks to the support of Stratton's management team, I was encouraged to teach again.

After a few weeks at the mountain, I made several observations. One, there are challenges associated with teaching through an impairment I wasn't aware of and that required new strategies. Two, some of the strategies I've employed to overcome my impairment could actually apply to all instructors. And three, I realized how valuable it is for children to have an instructor who is different and who has had to overcome a physical impairment.

New Strategies

I needed to find a way to communicate effectively using minimal speech. The cold weather and wind made communication difficult for me. I found a portable speaker with a microphone I could use to help project my voice. In some ways, teaching was similar to what I did before. Now, however, I did a lot more demonstrating and less speaking. Hand signals and gestures are key, and concise demonstrations of skills are paramount. I found myself using hand gestures and signals with my ski poles which the group learned and became accustomed to. Since I teach the same group of kids every weekend, they and their parents became accustomed to my expressions and the sound of my garbled voice.

My greatest concern (same as before my surgery) was keeping everyone safe on the mountain as I couldn't speak loudly or yell. My supervisor at Stratton assigned an apprentice to assist me in managing the group and ensuring the kids knew what to do in case they got separated from the group – which sometimes had over ten students. I relied on this assistant to demo skills and to communicate. When appropriate, I'd work one-on-one with a student on a specific skill.

Applying Strategies for All Instructors

I can speak, but my voice sounds quite different from a "normal" voice. It's guttural and soft. I can't raise my volume so, in a quiet environment, it's easy to hear and understand especially if you can see my lips move. Outside with my face covered, it's a challenge. Cold and dry air also impedes my speaking. Therefore, I move the group to the edge of trails where we are buffeted by trees; I face the group and speak directly using my microphone and speaker. Likewise, the background noise in a lodge makes me impossible to hear. So I get close to the kids and speak so they can see my lips move.

Building basic skills and confidence were my early season goals. As the season progressed, we took our skills to more difficult and steeper terrain. I used hand

signals when I wanted the group to stop and often had students lead the group to a desired destination. We maximized ski time and minimized talking – an effective means of teaching and having fun!

Would this style translate when teaching adults? I wanted to find out, so I taught some private lessons and began working with a senior group, who meet twice a week for two hours. Intermediate skiers, many of them started later in life and didn't own some of the basic skills. Instead of talking a lot, I demonstrated skills I wanted them to experience. Skiing backwards was a huge step for these adults. I could see anxiety in their eyes when I demonstrated but we used beginner terrain and once a few of them got the hang of it, the rest followed. The excitement of learning something they saw their grandkids doing was evident. They had fun and looked forward to mastering that skill and moving onto to 180s and 360s. I can't wait to get them into the terrain park next season.

More time on the hill skiing leads to an improvement in skills. We call this "getting mileage". Mileage along with basic education and skills training leads to growth and development. I feel my lessons prior to surgery were effective as I like to keep moving. However, my new approach encourages even more skiing and less talking resulting in faster growth and more fun. Both young and the old students have been patient and accepting. The kids seemed to forget about any differences after a week or two; they're just into skiing and having fun.

A Valuable Experience

I think it is valuable for the kids to experience an individual with an impairment. They realize that although I don't sound like them, I am not different from others. For many, it was their first time experiencing an impaired individual. I believe the experience will lead to greater acceptance, empathy, and understanding of people who appear to be different than themselves. Meanwhile, parents and my colleagues set a great example: they accepted my impairment unconditionally.

So yes, you can talk less and ski more. You can even teach without a voice box. For me, less talk translates to more fun and more effective lessons. Yes, there are limitations. The technology and the addition of the assistant were huge, but I can easily manage a class of five or fewer by myself – especially when students grow accustomed to my teaching style and where to go.

When I returned from my cancer surgery, I found myself in a unique situation – my main means of communication was diminished. I discovered that it was possible to teach despite this. Now I ski more and talk less – I challenge you to incorporate this in your lessons too.

Note: Len Black would like to know if there are other individuals with a total laryngectomy who are certified ski instructors. Contact him at lenblack@yahoo.com. ☞



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“Looking to stay up to date on snowsports activities this winter?”

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www.facebook.com/groups/PSIAEast/ and www.facebook.com/groups/AASIEast/

