

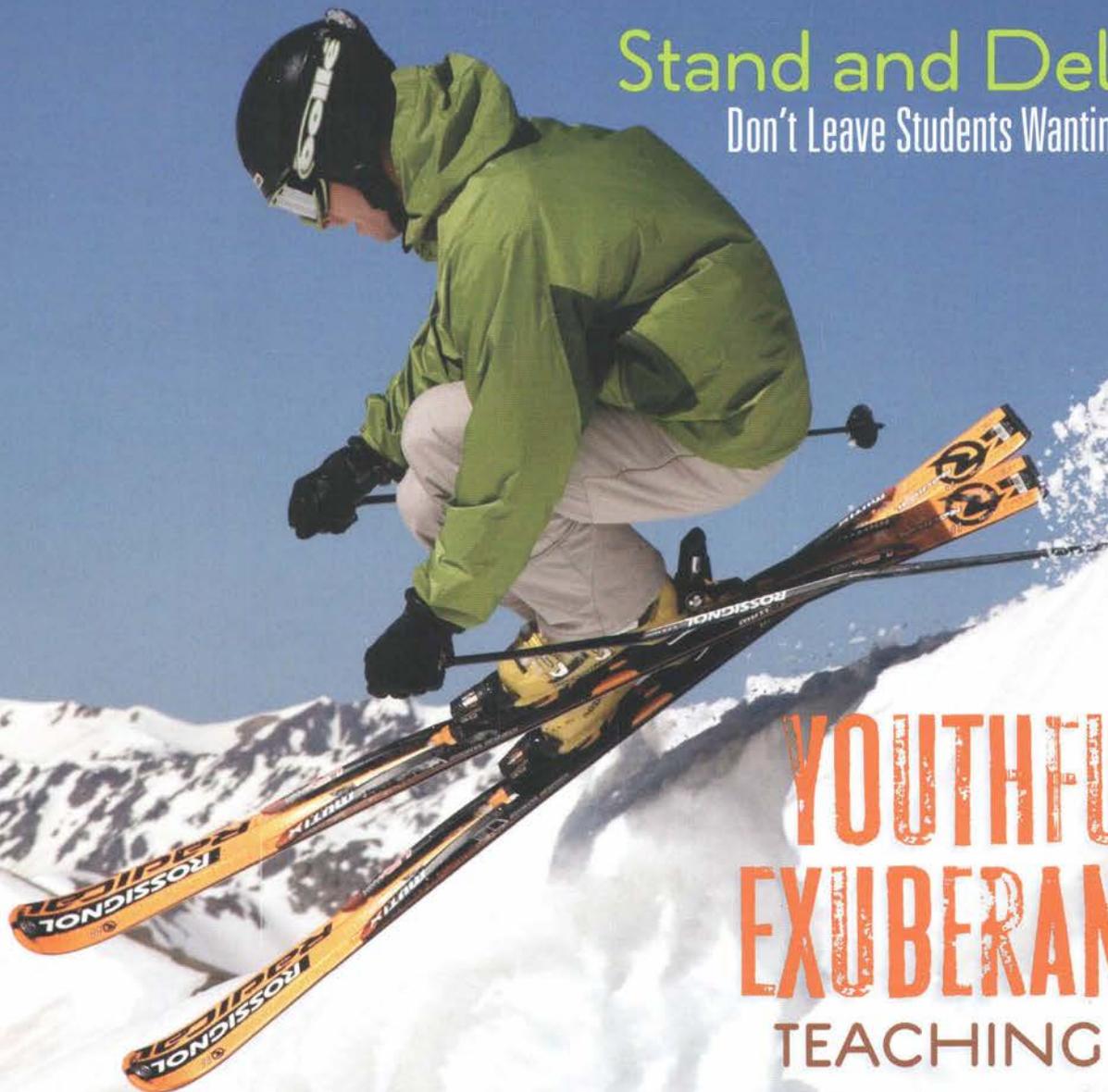
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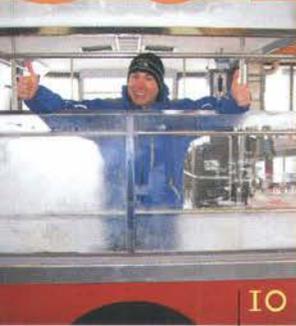


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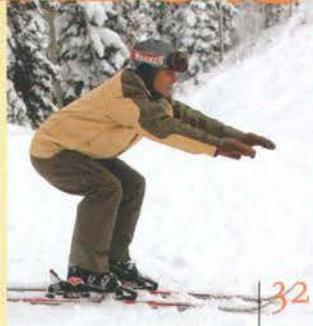
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PSIA ALPINE TEAM MEMBER ANDY DOCKEN SCORES A SWEET AND STEEP LAUNCH OVER A CORNICE ATOP INDEPENDENCE PASS, EAST OF ASPEN, COLORADO. PHOTO BY MEGAN HARVEY.



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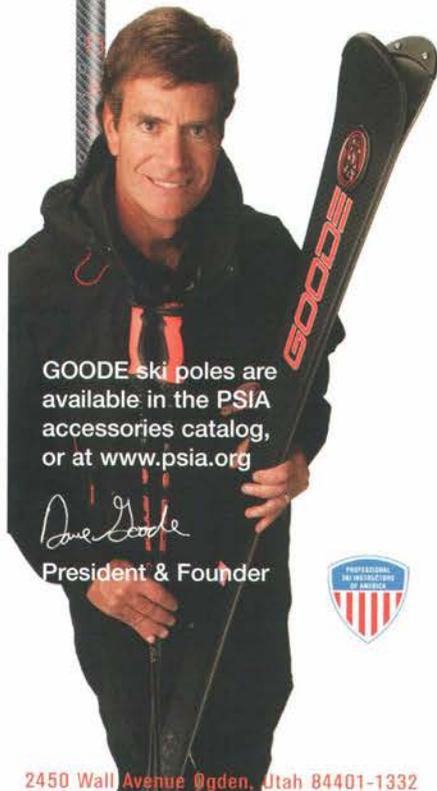
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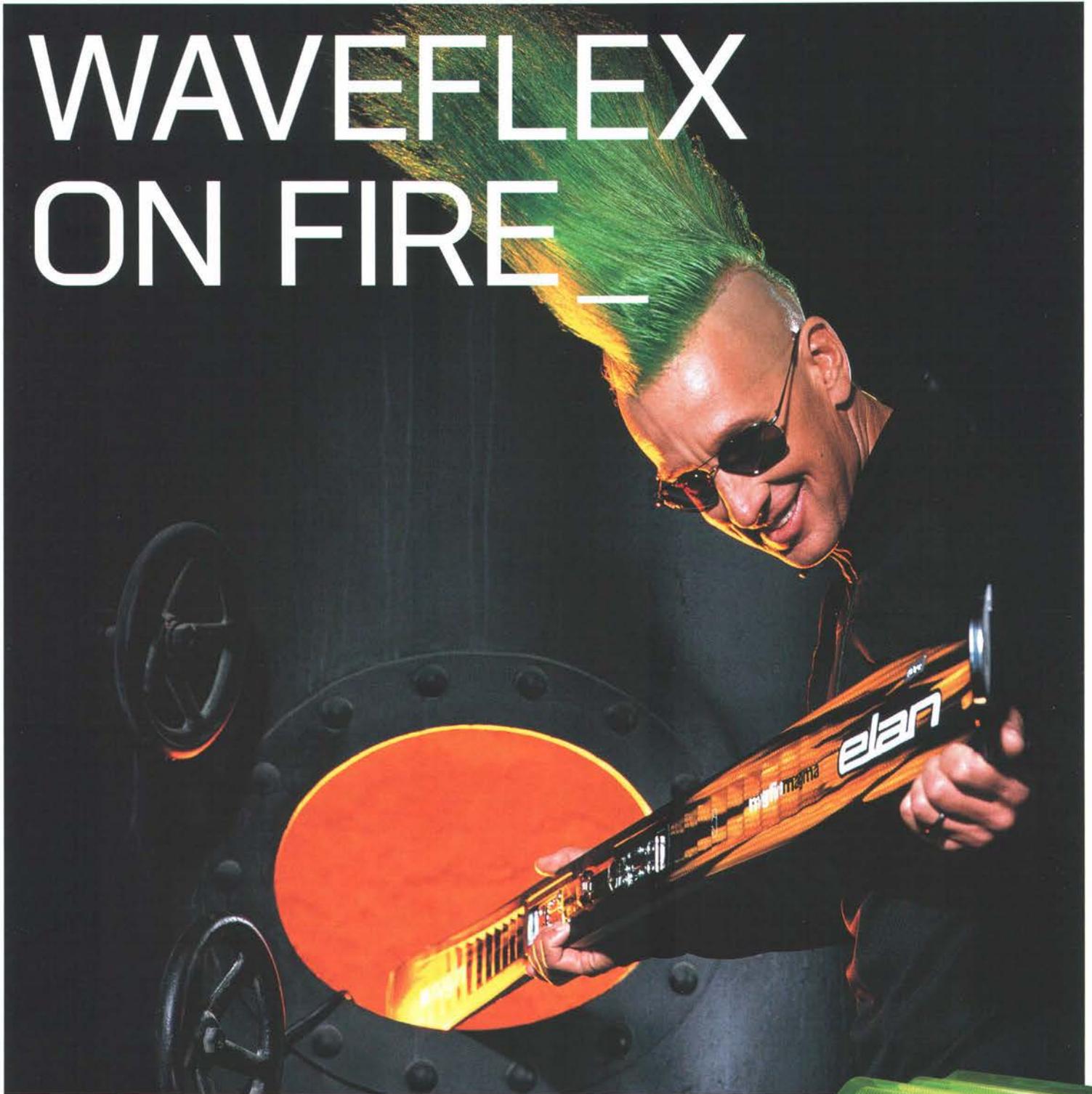
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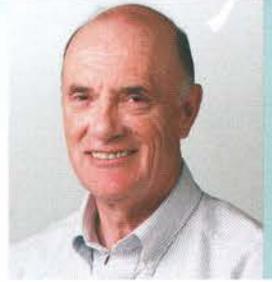
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BY RAY ALLARD, PSIA-AASI PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



managing diversity comes with the territory

"You can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." —John Lydgate, poet

Judging by articles in recent issues of *TPS* and *TPR*—on news updates, pay, dues, finances, and benefits—there is a lot going on within the association. One of the most challenging aspects of being involved in PSIA-AASI governance is dealing with the diversity within our organization. We strive to provide something for everybody, but we cannot be all things to everyone.

We can't always utilize a policy of "majority rules," because even the smallest constituencies or concerns need attention. Nor can we always compromise or average things out, because then solutions or services are sometimes just watered down, not fully meeting anyone's needs.

Diversity abounds within PSIA-AASI. Besides the normal gender splits, our membership represents a wide age range—from 16 on up into the 90s. Then there are the disciplines we teach, each of which differ in terms of gender and age breakdowns but also culturally: mainstream Alpine, traditional Nordic (especially track/skate and backcountry), free-spirited Snowboard, and the dedicated Adaptive (where many instructors happen to volunteer their services). Then there are the members who, in whatever discipline, devote their considerable talents exclusively to teaching kids.

For most members, teaching snowsports is a part-time diversion from their regular job and lifestyle. But for a great many it is paying the rent and putting food on the table. Some work at small, urban, day-trip, and program areas, while

others serve giant destination resorts, so the guests our members serve are also different. While these populations have varied needs and expectations, there are commonalities as well, relative to educational materials and programs, certification, and the desire to do a good job.

There is diversity in the governance group also. Your national board is comprised of part-time and full-time instructors and coaches, with a couple in school management and area management. Most are not involved in snowsports year-round, having careers as professionals and business owners within their broader communities. They are from different divisions—and those divisions help inform their perspective—but their mission is to make decisions that are best for association members as a whole, not their home regions. They all serve as volunteers.

Division presidents on the Presidents' Council also have diverse roles and backgrounds, and likewise serve as volunteers. They do advocate and lobby for their division, but ultimately try to compromise for the good of the whole organization or accommodate for differences.

Our nine divisions vary in size from less than 300 members to nearly 11,000, representing anywhere from one state to 17. Many comprise a membership mix that's 10–15 percent full-time, with the rest part-time. Offices range from home-based volunteer operations to those having paid professional staffs of 10–12 people. Some handle every aspect of membership service, while others rely on the national office to provide administrative functions while they concentrate mainly on educational/certification events.

Within the industry, resorts, associations, and companies affiliate with us for

many reasons. Suppliers and sponsors might seek representation on our teams, marketing opportunities, increased sales, or recognition. Snowsports schools represent a profit center for most resorts, just a service at others. Sister associations might seek marketing or educational partnerships, or joint ventures that benefit each.

We do so many things, you certainly can identify several that are personally meaningful. However, it is unlikely one person or group would ever avail themselves of all of them. You might not teach kids, but you can appreciate our need to revise the children's manual. You might not ever visit the national office, but understand the need for its existence to support 28,500 members.

We view our diversity as a strength, keeping us well-rounded (much like a good investment portfolio) and connected to all aspects of snowsports. It is still important that everything we do fits within our mission and vision statements:

Vision: Inspiring lifelong passion for the mountain experience

Mission: We support our members, as part of the snowsports industry, to:

- Develop personally and professionally
- Create positive learning experiences
- Have more fun

No one *has* to choose snowsports, either as a career or an activity. Our forte lies in the love of snowsports that we share among ourselves, our guests, and our partners. It's true that you can't please all of the people all of the time. But if we respect our diversity—the strengths, insights and, yes, even limitations that it brings to the table—we can do right by our members and the students they serve. ♦

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SHOW US THE MONEY

I read, with considerable interest, the winter 2008 letters of Neil MacGrain (“Bargain Consciousness”) and Max De Wardener (“Sharing the Wealth”), which were in response to an earlier letter by Bill Austin (“The High Cost of Ski Instruction,” fall 2007). Tom Buchanan’s letter (“Labor Dispute,” winter 2008), in response to an article by Melinda Cain Widener (“Worldview: The Wisdom of Cultural Sensitivity,” fall 2007), was on the same subject (i.e., the implications of prevailing wages for snowsports instructors).

Before addressing specific issues raised in those letters, I should mention that my love/hate relationship with the ski industry exceeds 40 years—I ran grooming machines at Winter Park (Colorado) in 1960 and threw dynamite at Sugar Bowl (California) in 1964. That same year I became an instructor, and have taught continuously since the early 1980s.

There can be no doubt that this industry, as a whole, exploits labor, and has been doing so since the beginning. What has changed between 1964 and today, however, is that wages have fallen well behind the cost of living for ski professionals—thus, the new phenomenon of mass importation of Midwestern and Eastern college students and foreigners to staff our larger resorts, as discussed by Tom Buchanan. In 1964, as an Aspen ski instructor, I could actually afford to live in Aspen. Feature that!”

Once, at a small part-time ski area, I got to split privates, the subject discussed by Max De Wardener. Currently, as one of the highest, if not *the* highest paid instructors at my ski area, I receive \$19.25/hour plus \$2/student-hour for privates. Compare that to the figures

De Wardener cites (\$35–\$60 per hour). Neil MacGrain says that he’s prepared to pay lots to become certified at the level necessary to qualify for employment in France, but fails to mention that in Europe a ski instructor is considered a professional, and is rewarded with a “living” wage, not to mention considerable prestige. You bet it’s hard to break into those ski schools.

All in all, it’s a pretty dismal picture for us snowsport professionals in this country. We can only expect more of the

out that the powers above us—who evaluate our teaching—need to “get it” too.

I cannot tell you how many times I have seen certain supervisors assign upper-level lessons to the same core of instructors who use the same spiel with every group, no matter what. When asking the paying public why they don’t take lessons, how many of you have been told, “Because I never hear anything new”?

At the other end of the spectrum, as classes get larger and/or more diverse, our ability to “get it” becomes more

I think it’s **IMPORTANT** to point out that the powers above us—who evaluate our teaching—need to “get it” too.

same, until, individually, we are forced out. My wife and I are Level III instructors with decades of experience. We truly love what we do, but we are now contemplating other ways to spend the winter. Those decades of experience may soon go to waste.

STEVE MILLER
SANTA FE, NM

GET IT?

Ray Allard’s in-depth commentary on why instructors have to be flexible in their teaching methods (“This Isn’t Rocket Science; It’s More Complex Than That!,” winter 2008) was right on. We’ve all shadowed instructors of every certification level who use the same canned lesson, regardless of weather, conditions, terrain, age, gender, experience, or number of students in the lesson. I applaud Mr. Allard’s suggestion to consider, when lessons go awry, that “maybe it was *you* who wasn’t getting it.” As a member of the front-line troops, however, I think it’s important to point

challenging regardless of certification level or experience. A case in point: While working a couple of years ago at a destination resort, I was assigned 31 “never-ers” from Mississippi—who’d never seen a vast mountain environment, let alone snow. The school’s policy was to get students up on the mountain and skiing a loop by the end of their first 2½-hour lesson. After 1½ hours, only 27 of my 31 students were ready to ride the chair and ski the loop. Late arrivals, equipment problems, and physical issues with altitude impacted the progress of the other four, so I inquired if another teacher might continue to work with them at the base area. My supervisor said the other instructors were already overtaxed and directed me to take all 31 up on the chair. We survived, but I can’t say “mission accomplished” for the four students who were hanging off my coat as we made our way down the hill that day.

At the end of the lesson, my supervisor came to me and said, “The failure of

your students is a direct reflection of your failure as an instructor,” and skied away.

It is clear to me that there are individuals at all levels in this industry who “don’t get it” and never will.

JUDSON DEXTER
SWANZEY, NH

TALK ABOUT VARIABLES!

Ray Allard’s winter 2008 commentary was a great piece on the complicated nature of ski teaching as compared to rocket science. I agree that our decision-making process—as well as the quality of those decisions—is directly related to each instructor’s base of knowledge and experience.

Here’s a great example of the complexity of human learning equations. This January I taught a beginner who was in his 40s and had a background in education. We talked about his learning style and he confidently tagged himself as a visual learner with a “late-climbing learning curve.”

In the process of describing efficient movements, body mechanics, weights, and balances, I translated these movements as kinesthetic input into his human system. Does rocket science have kinesthetic and audio input that is random and unique to each rocket? A rocket can be programmed to have a kinesthetic sense, such as measuring heat. A preprogrammed decision can be made. With humans we can only ask for verbal feedback, visually check for efficient movements to determine if our student understands the movement, and make adjustments from there.

Next came demonstrations to meet his visual learning needs. First I demonstrated the moves statically, then dynamically as he followed me down the slope. Periodically I’d follow him, studying his progress. Ah, another level of complexity. I received visual data of efficient and inefficient movements, with my discoveries directly related to my knowledge and experience base. I then used the

data to create audio, kinesthetic, and visual instruction.

Amazingly, so strong was his reaction to visual input that he would get distracted—so much so that he would forget all the theory and learned knowledge and just react (often inefficiently). For example, upon seeing the orange fencing at the end of the run, he would lean in the opposite direction. Or he

“Steer your feet,” “Look where you want to go,” “Pole baskets back,” “Good job,” “Nice shift of weight to that left foot,” “Great turn!”). Soon he was standing tall, looking relaxed, and turning with rhythm. When the slope changed, I encouraged him to “go with it” and commit to the turn. He responded remarkably, as if he were an auditory—rather than a visual—learner. Yes, students often exhibit a com-

I agree that our **DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**—as well as the quality of those decisions—is directly related to each instructor’s base of knowledge and experience.

would lean away from another skier. And we all know that when you lean away from something you’re afraid of, you tend to slide towards it!

Adjusting my teaching—based on the movement data—I started following him and calling out instruction, encouragement, and reminders of theory (i.e.,

plex combination of all three learning styles and our challenge as instructors is to process “input” and produce solutions. Then we evaluate the new movements and start all over again.

What in rocket science has these variables without pattern? The student and
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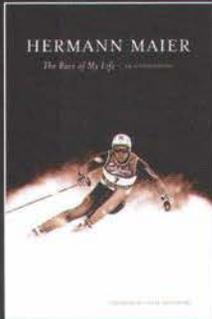
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

the instructor have such distinctly unique physical, mental, and psychic abilities that a fixed equation or formula is unlikely to be found. The complexity of two unique human systems, the instructor and the student, far surpasses the complexity of rocket science, in my opinion. Ray Allard's commentary was right on point, emphasizing to me the incredible value of increasing my human knowledge and experience—all in the pursuit of more effective teaching and learning.

PATRICK A. CONNOLLY
KALISPELL, MT

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Ray Allard's commentary in the winter 2008 issue got me thinking (always a dangerous thing).

In 24 years as a ski instructor I've witnessed many changes in technique and equipment, especially in the last eight years I've been involved with our

resort's tremendously successful direct-to-parallel program. The one thing that hasn't changed, however, is our guests' anxiety level. This really becomes evident if you have a reason to touch the individual (with his or her permission, of course). How often have you tried to push a knee toward the hill so the guest can feel the edge engage while sidestepping, only to encounter a leg as stiff as a two-by-four? This is fear.

To reduce some of that fear, I work at being as unthreatening as possible, injecting humor into the lesson and keeping instructions simple. Rather than saying that we will go "left" or "right," I point—saying we'll go that way or this way—and use no jargon or tech talk.

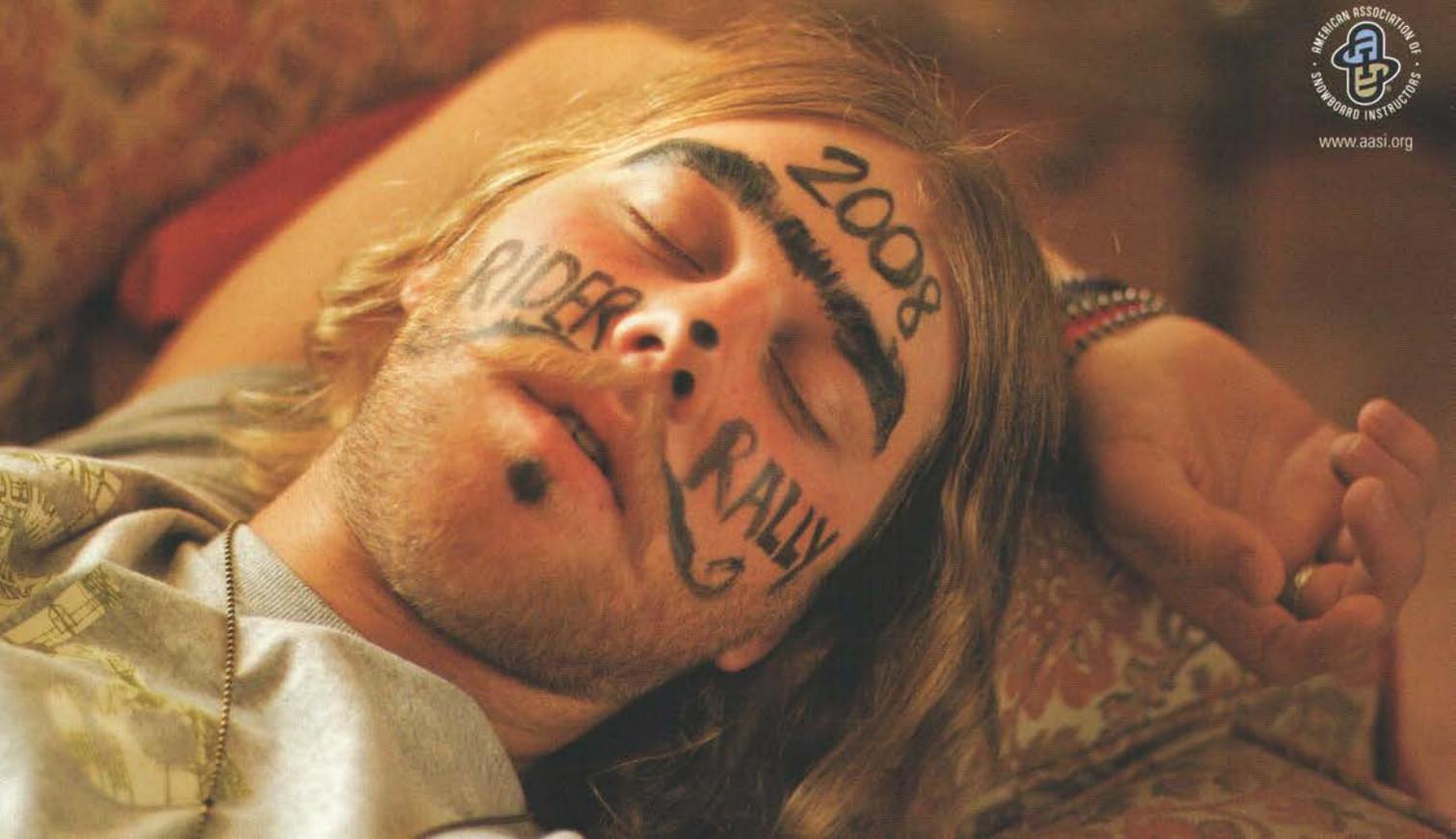
Last year I made a conscious effort to eliminate from my teaching lexicon terms like, "Lean downhill" or "Lean forward." Think of how terrifying the concept of leaning forward must be to the person who is sliding for the first time?!

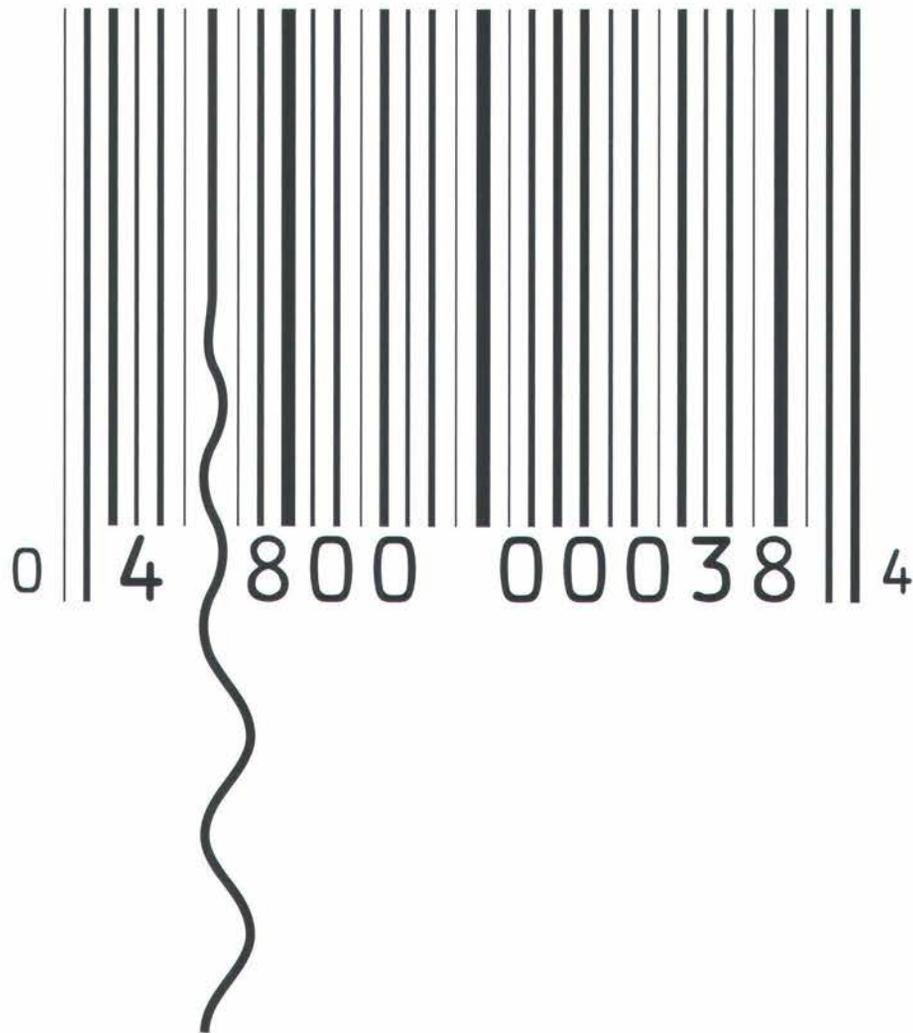
I now use terms like "Feel your shins against your boots," "Stand on the skis, feeling your feet in the boots," and "Keep your bellybutton over the toes." This accomplishes the same result, and adds little to the anxiety level of the guest.

We must be aware of our choice of words when we teach. It is the bunny hill to us, but to the beginner it is the Matterhorn. Teaching beginners has made me very aware of the apprehension people bring to our wonderful sport. Be aware of what you are asking the guest to do; be they beginner or advanced student. Remember what it felt like the first time you started a turn with the downhill leg or the first time you moved your center through the fall line at the top of a turn? Scary stuff. So, put yourself in the boots of an adventurous individual who is anxious at best but most likely scared stiff. It's worked for me.

JIM WACHALA
HANCOCK, MA ♦

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★ RISING YOUNG STARS ★

of PSIA

By Joanne
Cohson,
Associate
Editor

CHANGING THE WORLD, *One Ski Lesson at a Time*

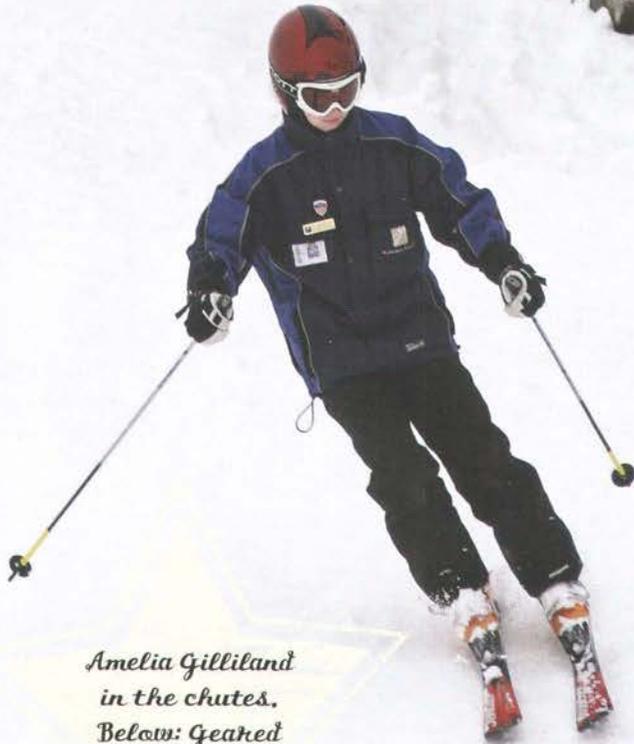
Global warming, the war in Iraq, the subprime mortgage crisis: it sure is easy to get depressed these days about the state of the world. So, we thought you might need a little inspiration. On the following pages are 11 young ski instructors, rising stars from every division of PSIA, and they're here to rock your world. Full of enthusiasm, energy, and high ideals, we bet you won't be able to read about them without cracking a smile. But don't be fooled; as the future of PSIA, this next generation of instructors is serious about passing on to others a passionate love of skiing.

We're sure we've only scratched the surface, and there are many more young protégés out there in PSIA-land. Keep your eyes peeled; maybe you'll run into one yourself.

Get ready to be inspired.

ALASKA

JON AND MICHELLE CROW/CROW'S VIEW PHOTOGRAPHY



*Amelia Gilliland
in the chutes.
Below: Geared
up with her
brother, Simon.*



Name: Amelia Gilliland Age: 17
Hometown: Eagle River, Alaska
Area affiliation: Alyeska Resort; Girdwood, Alaska
PSIA credentials: Alpine Level II

Skiing has been a part of Amelia Gilliland's life for as long as she can remember, and even before that, too. When Amelia's mother married her dad—an avid skier—she decided she'd better learn to ski or risk missing out on a lot of fun. Now her mom's an ardent skier, too, and parents have passed their passion on to the kids. Says 17-year-old Amelia, "When I came along, they started me on skis the season after I learned to walk, and I have enjoyed it ever since."

When Amelia was in her teens, her ski-instructor father encouraged her to give teaching a try. Amelia says she began instructing "just a few days after I turned fourteen." After her first lesson, she was hooked, and has since taught more than 100 children. She earned her Level I alpine certification the year after she started instructing and her Level II the following spring. "Preparing for and taking both of the exams was certainly beneficial for me. I learned so much, not only about being an effective instructor and improving my own skiing, but also about other life skills such as diligence in spending extra time and effort in studying for the exams and determination and perseverance even when it was tough," says Amelia. A higher level of certification might be in her future, as she plans to keep instructing part-time, but for now she's focused on maintaining good grades as she finishes high school.

Amelia says, "My favorite thing about instructing is the opportunity it gives to touch a child's life in a positive way, not just in learning skills, but in life. Even the most difficult children—the ones who disrupt the class, try to run off, are mean to the other kids, or won't hold still for even 10 seconds—they need to be loved just as everyone else does, and this is a chance to show them love and show them that they are important. The kids look up to you so much, and you can make a huge impact on their life in just an hour or two!"

Her own role models are her parents and Caroline Ahrens, a former supervisor and fellow instructor. She adds, "My skiing abilities and who I am as a ski instructor are a result of many people's encouragement, support, and pointers, and those who have pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and do what I thought I couldn't do. Thank you to everyone who has invested in my life in this area—because of you I am now able to invest in other's lives just as you have done for me!"



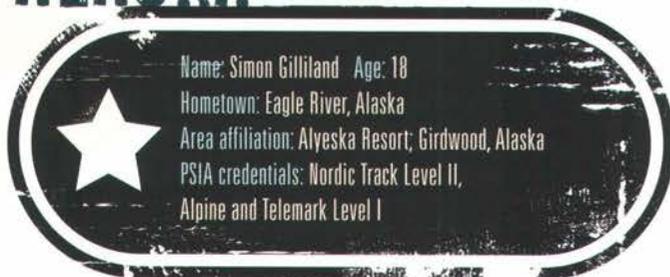
CRAIG GILLILAND

CONTINUED

ALASKA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

CENTRAL



Name: Simon Gilliland Age: 18
Hometown: Eagle River, Alaska
Area affiliation: Alyeska Resort; Girdwood, Alaska
PSIA credentials: Nordic Track Level II,
Alpine and Telemark Level I



Name: Tim Werts Age: 20
Hometown: Plymouth, Minnesota
Area affiliation: Blizzard Ski & Snowboard School
traveling club; Minnesota
PSIA credentials: Alpine Level I

Along with his sister, Amelia, 18-year-old Simon Gilliland grew up skiing and says it was an event his family did together. He started instructing when he was 15 because, he says, "I came to a point in my alpine racing where I was not able to be competitive while training only one day a week. At this point my lift tickets also became more expensive and I needed a way to pay for my expensive hobby."

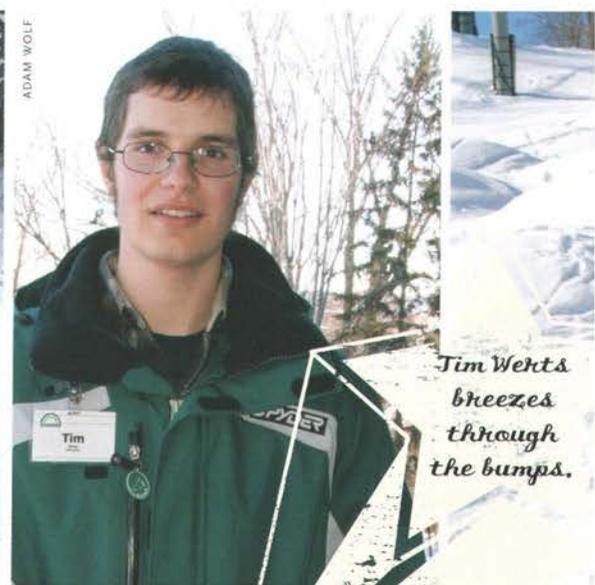
Simon plans to keep instructing in the future and is working on earning his Level II alpine and telemark certifications. He also plans on taking the Level III nordic track exam. His role models are his dad and Max Rothman, a fellow Alyeska instructor. Simon says his favorite thing about instructing is "seeing the enjoyment children get from successfully learning to ski." According to him the greatest challenge is the varied athleticism, strength, and size of students in a given lesson.

Simon is so devoted to teaching that he'll check his ego at the door and put up with the "indignities" that inevitably come with the territory. "When it was 'Crazy Helmet Day' during Christmas camp," he recalls, "the kids put a pink, yellow, blue, and green star-dusted helmet cover on my helmet, and insisted I wear it all day." The best advice a fellow instructor ever gave him was to take his time and think about the answers during his certification exams, especially if he had not experienced that particular teaching situation before, and not to let the examiner rush him into the next question. And the best advice a student ever gave him? "We shouldn't take so long to eat lunch."

When Tim Werts was three years old, his father took him to a local hill to learn how to ski. At six years old, his dad enrolled him in Blizzard Ski & Snowboard School, where he himself taught, and, as Tim says, "I've been with Blizzard ever since." The 20-year-old became an instructor in order to hang out with his dad. "I started six years ago in Blizzard's apprentice program, and I've been a full instructor for the past three years," he says. "I've also had the opportunity to help start a small high school race program near my college in southern Minnesota."

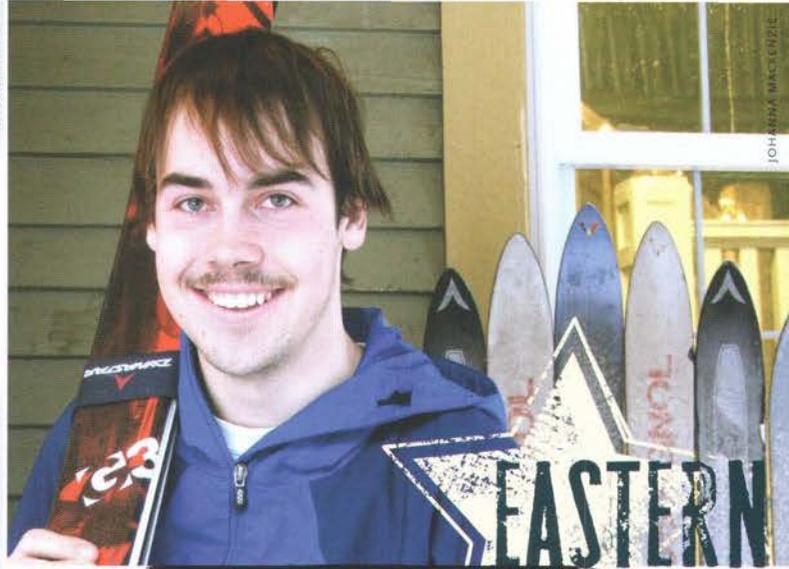
Tim, who foresees himself teaching for a very long time, plans to get his Level II certification in March and his telemark Level I next winter. The kids he teaches are very important to him, and he sees his greatest challenge as "making sure that I connect with every kid in my lesson, and that I am able to give each of them equal amounts of attention." The best part about instructing, Tim says, is "the enjoyment I get from watching a kid learn new things." To illustrate this, he describes his best lesson: "A few weeks back I had the opportunity to take a one-on-one with a never-ever, and by the end of the day I had him confidently skiing down some of the more mellow runs."

About his role models, Tim says, "Of notable fame, Glen Plake and Shane McConkey for sure, but, growing up, I really looked up to some of my former instructors who are now co-workers." He adds, "I love every aspect there is about skiing, from spending a day with some never-evers on the bunny hill to being a high school slalom racer and USSA mogul skier. I've had the ability to see all sides of the spectrum and become a very well-rounded skier."



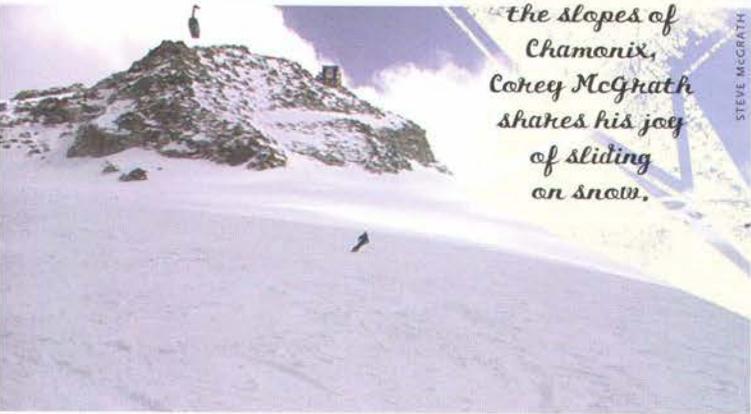


ERICA CAMPBELL



JOVANIK MACENZIE

Name: Corey McGrath **Age:** 20
Hometown: Sunapee, New Hampshire
Area affiliation: Mount Sunapee Resort;
 Newbury, New Hampshire
PSIA credentials: Telemark Level II,
 Alpine Level I, Snowboard Level I



STEVE MCGRATH

From his home powder to the slopes of Chamonix, Corey McGrath shakes his joy of sliding on snow.



ADAM WOLF

Ski instructing is in 20-year-old Corey McGrath's blood. He explains, "My dad is an instructor, my mom used to be one, and my grandfather taught skiing in the Tenth Mountain Division during World War II." Skiing has always been a part of his life—he can't pinpoint any particular day that he started. Corey says, "It was more of a gradual process—as I grew, skiing became a larger part of my life." He began instructing during the 2001–2002 season, and notes additional motivation: "Getting paid to go skiing seemed like a wonderful thing."

He also finds wonder in sharing his love of the sport with others. In relating his favorite thing about instructing, Corey says, "I really enjoy sharing the joy of sliding on snow with people. That look when someone can perform a new movement is very inspiring to me." The little things in life are what he likes best. "After skiing I really enjoy simple things—even a good high-five will do it for me."

Corey sees the greatest challenge to instructing as "a defeatist attitude. I would rather have an un-athletic person excited to ski than an athlete who doesn't want to learn." He plans on increasing his certification levels in the future, and has been trying to gain a new level each year. "I definitely plan on making skiing a large part of my life, probably instructing or guiding backcountry skiing," he says.

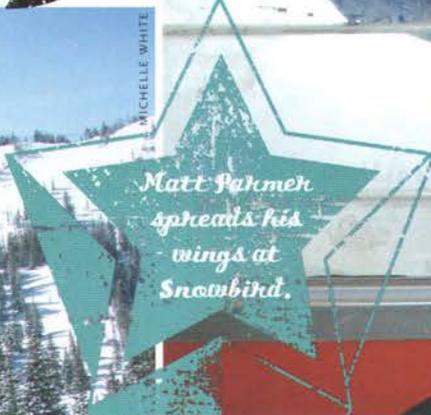
His role models are his parents, fellow instructor Mickey Stone, and Sondre Nordheim, a pioneer of modern skiing. The best advice Corey ever got from another instructor was: "Never forget that teaching isn't a job. If you want a real job, that starts at 9 a.m.—we start when the lifts turn." The best advice a student ever gave him was: "Never stop doing as much as you can. Once you start settling, your life will fly by."

CONTINUED

INTERMOUNTAIN



MICHELLE WHITE



MICHELLE WHITE

a lesson was when one of his students skied down into a creek. Matt jumped in after the child and helped him out, but tore his MCL (medial collateral ligament) in the process and was out for a month. The best advice a fellow instructor ever gave him was "Stop thinking, and ski this run as fast as you can." The best advice a student ever gave him? "Stop talking, so we can ski." Matt says his role models are "Fellow instructor Bill Stanley, and all the people that I work with who have found a way to make a living doing something that they absolutely love."

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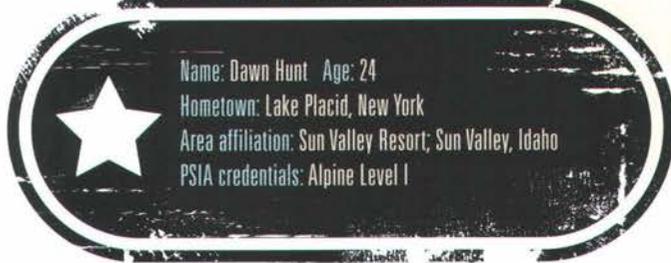
Twenty-three-year-old Matt Parmer began skiing in Michigan when he was six years old, but it wasn't until college that he decided he wanted to make a lifestyle out of it. "I went on a huge trip with the Michigan State University Ski Team to Park City and Alta, and then bought every ski movie I could find when I got back. I watched them every night, too," says Matt.

He began instructing in 2005 (when he was 21) at Crystal Mountain, Michigan, because he liked coaching and loved to ski. "Becoming an instructor was an obvious choice," he explains. Matt intends to get his alpine Level III and then start on his telemark certification. When asked if he plans on making instructing his career, he says, "I can see crazier things happening."

Matt says his favorite thing about instructing is "being in the mountains everyday with some of the best co-workers and skiers I've ever met." He also enjoys sharing his sport with others. "Whenever someone tells me that they feel more comfortable skiing or that their quads don't burn anymore, I'm super happy," he says. Matt sees his greatest challenge as finding a balance between instructing and getting in enough time to explore skiing on his own.

The most heinous thing that's ever happened to him during

NORTHERN INTERMOUNTAIN



"I was very fortunate when it comes to skiing," says 24-year-old Dawn Hunt. She explains, "I was born in Houston, Texas, so dew on the lawn in the early morning was my conception of snow. When we moved to Lake Placid, New York, my misunderstanding was quickly corrected. It was love at first sight!" When she was six, that fateful first snowfall came and her parents took Dawn and her brother out of school for their first family lesson. As she puts it, "It has been all downhill from there!"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Kloynx

NORTHERN INTERMOUNTAIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Dawn naturally progressed into instructing. "Whiteface Mountain, New York, has an excellent program for upcoming instructors," she says. "It is a volunteer apprentice program where teens assist the children's camp instructors with lessons while receiving a free season pass, and a lot of clinics and advice from the pros in return. Needless to say, my career took off with this program. I became an official instructor at the age of 16, but I had been prepping for it since the age of 12."

She continues, "The person who enticed me to become an instructor was the instructor who first taught me. I only saw her one other time after that first lesson, but I'll never forget her name (Anya), smile, and words of encouragement. She showed me how one person can have a big impact on your life. The joy which was instilled into me is a gift that I can't help but share. Who ever thought a ski instructor could make such a difference?"

To Dawn, making a difference is what instructing is all about. She explains, "Ski instructing is not a career you take because of the money (sorry, mom and dad). If you are looking for a great retirement plan, then you'd better go back to law or medical school. However, if you want to have the time of your life, then there is no better time than now. It is simple: I love to ski and I am so grateful to be able to help others discover the same."

Dawn's favorite lesson experience provides a great example of that: "I was assigned a two-hour private lesson with a 68-year-old grandmother, whose only goal was to make it down the bunny hill with her four- and six-year-old grandchildren. She had been in several other lessons during which the instructors really pushed her, causing her to become fearful and lose her confidence. I was her last attempt. The following day out on the slopes, I was greeted with a bear hug from her and a couple high-fives from her grandchildren, too! Moments like that are the best things!"



Name: Andrew Toft Age: 19
Hometown: Twin Falls, Idaho
Area affiliation: Sun Valley Resort; Sun Valley, Idaho
PSIA credentials: Alpine Level II

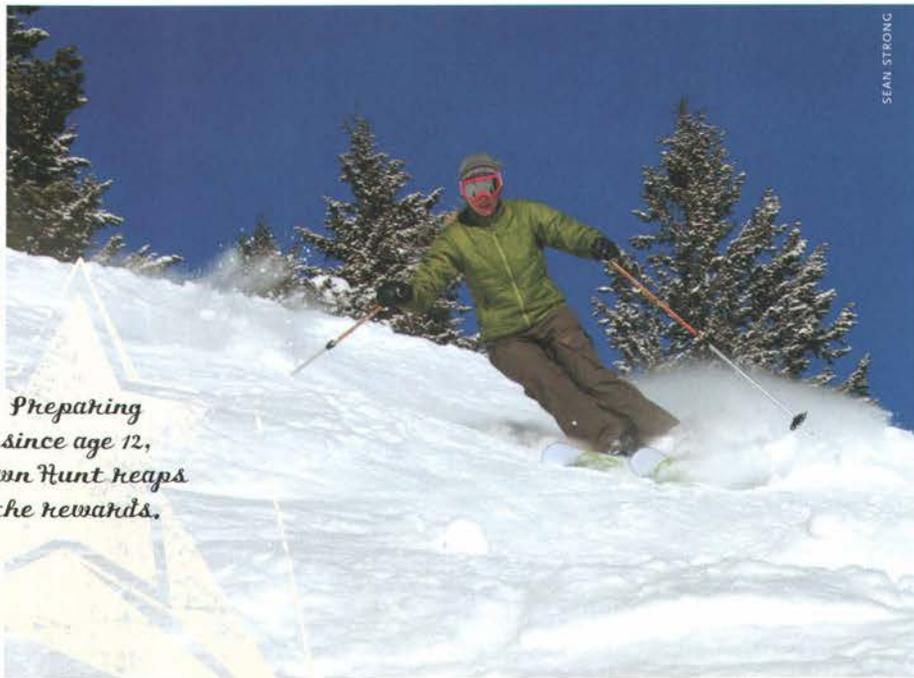
"I've been skiing with my dad since the moment I could fit into ski boots," says 19-year-old Andrew Toft. His dad teaches at Pomerelle Mountain Resort in Albion, Idaho, on the weekends, and when Andrew was a little kid he used to go ski with his father and the other instructors. Says Andrew, "I loved how awesome they were at shredding. At Pomerelle, the instructors were definitely the best skiers on the mountain, and I wanted to be like them." So at 14, Andrew started down that path, becoming an instructor himself. "I was so excited to get my first uniform and name tag I could hardly believe it," he says.

His favorite thing about instructing is "when I can get someone to fall in love with skiing and have the time of their lives on the slopes learning with me," he says. Andrew tells the story of his best day instructing like this: "I had a lesson where a little Australian girl got so cold that she was convinced that because she couldn't feel her toes, they had fallen off inside of her boots and she was going to die. I pulled her boots off her feet and warmed her little toes until the blood was flowing and she could feel them. The next day she gave me a tiny koala bear and told me I was her hero for saving her."

He says that one of the greatest challenges is teaching people who don't necessarily throw themselves into the learning experience. When that happens, he sometimes finds himself "tricking the skeptical students into improving their skiing."



Prepping since age 12, Dawn Hunt keeps the rewards.





WEYLIN BARRET

Andrew Toft
shreds with
the best.



MARY TOFT

But sometimes he learns from his students. “At the beginning of a lesson once I was trying to explain a task to a student and all of a sudden he said, ‘Stop talking and show me!’ That gave me a better awareness of pinpointing the different learning styles of students and catering to those preferences,” says Andrew.

His fellow instructors give good advice as well, telling Andrew to take as many clinics as possible and analyze every skier he sees. Maybe that’s why he says his role models are, “Bonnie Wetmore, Barry Whiting, Heather Davis, and every other instructor who has spent time helping me hack my way down the hill.”

Andrew plans on getting his Level III certification this year, and as for the future, he says, “I will ski and teach until I keel over on the slopes and die.”

jacket from my mom, some ‘hand-me-down’ snow pants, and an armful of equipment that the rental guy told me were logs. After a year of being a ‘Mighty Might’ in Bridger Bowl’s youth program and renting all my equipment from the ski area, I was hooked on the sport.”

He continues, “The following season, I gathered all my birthday and Christmas money and bought a season pass and some skis (this was when ‘some skis’ meant one pair, not six or seven), and joined the local race team. I then raced USSA most of the way through high school, while skiing roughly 70 days per season. Now that I am a university student, I am able to ski around 120 days per season.”

From there, instructing was a natural next step. He began instructing at Bridger Bowl Ski Area during the winter of 2005 at the age of 17. “I was enthusiastic at the prospect of becoming a part of the ski school” says Neil, “because skiing was and continues to be—now along with instructing—my greatest passion.

Describing his favorite thing about instructing, Neil says, “I love the personalities and abilities that each student brings to the hill. I enjoy getting to know my students and their abilities. In fact, it is the challenge of teaching each student that makes instructing such compelling work for me.”

Referring to the challenge of instructing, he adds, “Once I began teaching, I immediately realized that becoming a good teacher required as much dedication and effort as becoming a good skier.”

Moving forward, Neil plans to increase his certification in the future and intends to take the PSIA Alpine Level III exam in April. “Exams and the necessary training have offered a great way for me to focus my efforts toward becoming a better skier and a better ski instructor,” he says. “After Level III, I plan to

CONTINUED

NORTHERN ROCKY MTN

Name: Neil Lande Age: 20
 Hometown: Bozeman, Montana
 Area affiliation: Bridger Bowl Ski Area, Bozeman, Montana, and Mt. Ruapehu; Turoa Ski Field, New Zealand
 PSIA credentials: Alpine Level II, Adaptive Level I, Nordic Downhill Level I

“I have always been interested in skiing and intrigued by the people who take part in the sport,” says 20-year-old Neil Lande. Originally from Pennsylvania, when Neil was 11 years old his family moved to Bozeman, Montana, near the mountain where he took his first lesson. Neil says, “I turned up for my lesson with no sunglasses, a ‘lightly worn’ down



KEVIN LANDE



KEVIN LANDE

Neil Lande now teaches skiing in Montana with the same dedication and effort he applied to racing.

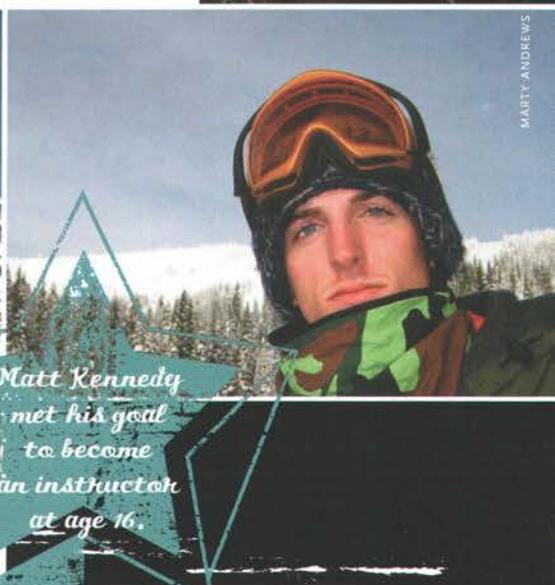
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train to be an examiner for PSIA and work as hard as I know how to develop the capabilities required to be on the national team.”

You'd be hard-pressed to find someone more positive and enthusiastic than this young instructor. “Skiing is a great sport and a great challenge to teach,” he says. “I wake up each day to the booming sound of explosives set off by the Bridger Bowl Ski Patrol’s avalanche team. I look out my window and see the Ridge that I will be climbing up and skiing down later that day. I am truly fortunate to live in Montana, with just a 10-minute drive to one of the best ski areas in the world. I realize that so much in life is not just talent and hard work, but opportunity.”



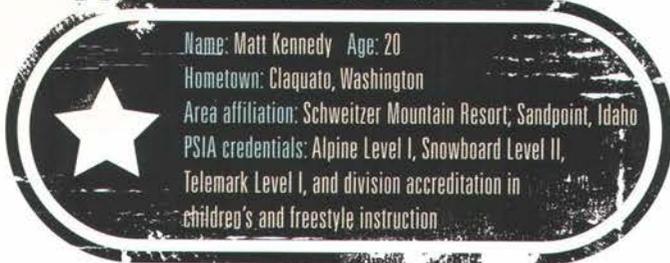
MARTY ANDREWS



MARTY ANDREWS

Matt Kennedy met his goal to become an instructor at age 16.

NORTHWEST



Name: Matt Kennedy Age: 20
 Hometown: Claquato, Washington
 Area affiliation: Schweitzer Mountain Resort; Sandpoint, Idaho
 PSIA credentials: Alpine Level I, Snowboard Level II, Telemark Level I, and division accreditation in children’s and freestyle instruction

Matt Kennedy got hooked on skiing when he was 10 years old. It all began, the 20-year-old says, when, “I got a lesson for Christmas. It changed my life. I have been riding as much as possible, meeting cool people, and getting myself and others better at riding snow with passion ever since then. Ten years later here I am.”

Matt became a junior instructor at Whitepass, Washington, when he was 15, because, he says, “They wouldn’t hire me any

younger. I became a full instructor when I was 16.” As for his motives, Matt says, “I became an instructor to show kids and adults the awesome world of skiing and snowboarding.” His favorite thing about instructing is, “Being on snow everyday, meeting new people, and having fun—that’s the best part.” He adds, “It’s easy to stay positive.”

As for his greatest teaching challenge, Matt says, “I am always trying to come up with creative new ways to teach without being boring, confusing, or weird.” He says the best advice a fellow instructor ever gave him was to “Go into instructor mode before meeting your clients.” With regard to his students’ influence on him, Matt relates, “A student told me to do a 360 once, so I did, and it got the class all stoked to get better so that they could do 360s, too. That’s really what it’s all about. Sharing goals and going after them.”

Matt has a few goals of his own. “This year I am going for my alpine Level II, snowboard Level III, and freestyle Level II—it would be cool to get certified in freestyle on skis and on snowboard.” As you might imagine, he says his role models are, “Anybody out on the slopes havin’ fun.”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Name: Shannon Buhler Age: 20
Hometown: Breckenridge, Colorado
Area affiliation: Breckenridge Ski Resort;
Breckenridge, Colorado
PSIA credentials: Alpine Level I

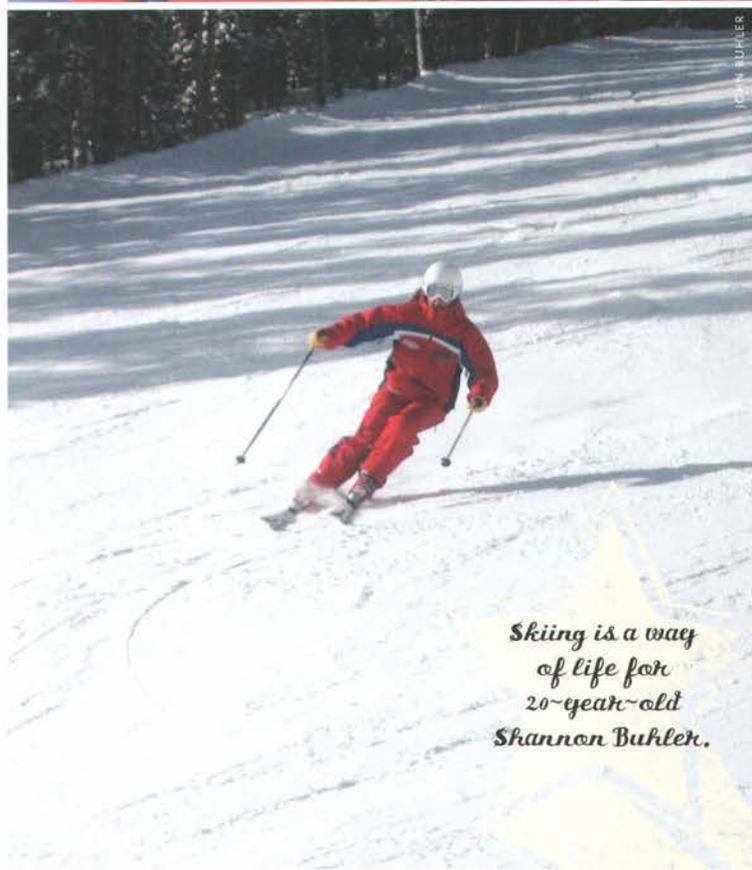
Although this is 20-year-old Shannon Buhler's first year instructing, she started skiing when she was 14 months old. "In my family, skiing is a way of life," she explains. "I was hooked the moment I put on my skis." Her dad, director of the ski school and skier services at Breckenridge, taught her how to ski and truly enjoy the sport. Shannon says her favorite thing about instructing is "Teaching other people how incredible skiing can be and why I enjoy it so much. Maybe the day they come to me for a lesson they will see through their own eyes why this can be a lifelong sport for them as well."

Along with enjoyment, ski instructing for Shannon is about making connections. She describes the best thing that's ever happened to her in the context of a lesson like this: "I taught a little three-year-old girl one day, and you could just tell she hadn't been away from her parents much. She was pretty upset that they had left, so I took her out on the slopes, where she was extremely hesitant. Finally we got on the magic carpet with our boots and rolled down the hill a few times, until she was comfortable enough to put on her skis. Once she did her eyes lit up and she loved gliding down the hill. As her confidence grew she started gliding on her own. You could just tell how much fun she was having. The next day I was teaching a different class and she came out onto the hill, and would not ski with anyone else besides me. It just showed the connection you can really have with the kids you teach everyday!"

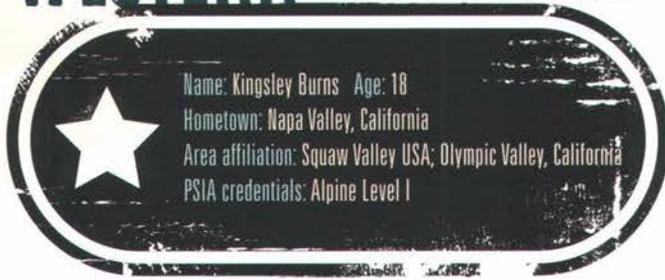
The tough part about teaching kids, thinks Shannon, is that every one learns differently. "Incorporating each learning style into each lesson can be challenging at times," she says. But then she puts it all into perspective, relating what a fellow instructor told her: "The best advice I probably ever received was just to make sure that you and your kids are having fun. Make jokes; play games—anything to keep your kids interested in skiing and enjoying themselves." It's easy to have a good time when you notice the funny things kids say; when she asks where they're from, they say things like "my mom," and "home."

Though funny, those answers make sense to Shannon, whose role models are her parents. She says, "They have supported me through all my sports, and schooling, and have worked so hard throughout their lives. I look up to them everyday, and am thankful for having such an amazing family."

CONTINUED



*Skiing is a way
of life for
20-year-old
Shannon Buhler.*



Eighteen-year-old Kingsley Burns started skiing when he was 10. Kingsley explains, “I took lessons here at Squaw Valley with a great instructor, caught on quickly, and loved it! Eight years later, I’m skiing with the same instructor—as a co-worker.” Kingsley took a “gap year” before entering college and worked full-time last season instructing, taking in-house clinics, and attending the Level I module to obtain his certification. His own initial encounter with skiing is what inspired him to teach. “I had a great ski school experience when I first learned to ski; I knew I could leave guests with similarly positive experiences, and help them to love the sport. The opportunities for professional development were another incentive—I learn every day, and my skiing is better than ever!”

Kingsley’s favorite thing about instructing is “Helping people enjoy themselves out on the mountain! The lessons I like are the ones where I can help students really change the way they feel about skiing—whether it’s showing them how to control their speed through turn shape, fixing the constant edge lock that’s kept them from turning, or helping them ride a chairlift without falling. When they thank me at the end, these people really mean it!”

As an example, he relates the story of his best lesson: “A woman from my group class returned for a private lesson, and by correcting her problems on an individual basis, I was able to help her advance from a Level 1 class (her third attempt) to a Level 5 in only a few hours! All she needed was someone to help her clean up her movements and work more effectively. Once she understood what she was actually doing to her skis, her progress skyrocketed. Though such a leap was quite atypical, it was an extremely rewarding lesson—for both of us!”

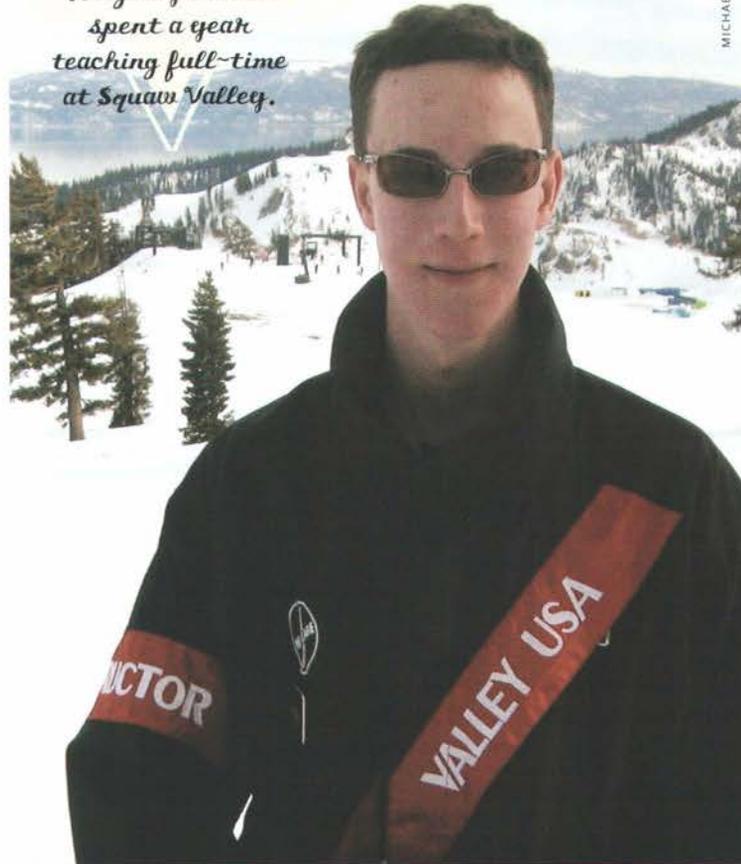
While helping his students learn, Kingsley also learns by listening to them. He says the best advice a student ever gave him was, “Go easy on me, I’m an old woman!” He continues, “It can be easy to fall into a pattern, especially with beginner lessons. This exchange in particular really reminded me how important it is to adapt your material, presentation, and overall teaching style to each client.”

As far as role models go, Kingsley says he is encouraged by things he sees all the time. “I find inspiration and admirable traits in all sorts of everyday people—I don’t seek to emulate them as a whole, but aspire to some of their better qualities.” ♦



Before beginning college, Kingsley Burns spent a year teaching full-time at Squaw Valley.

MICHAEL MOSHER



TODD HIPSLEY





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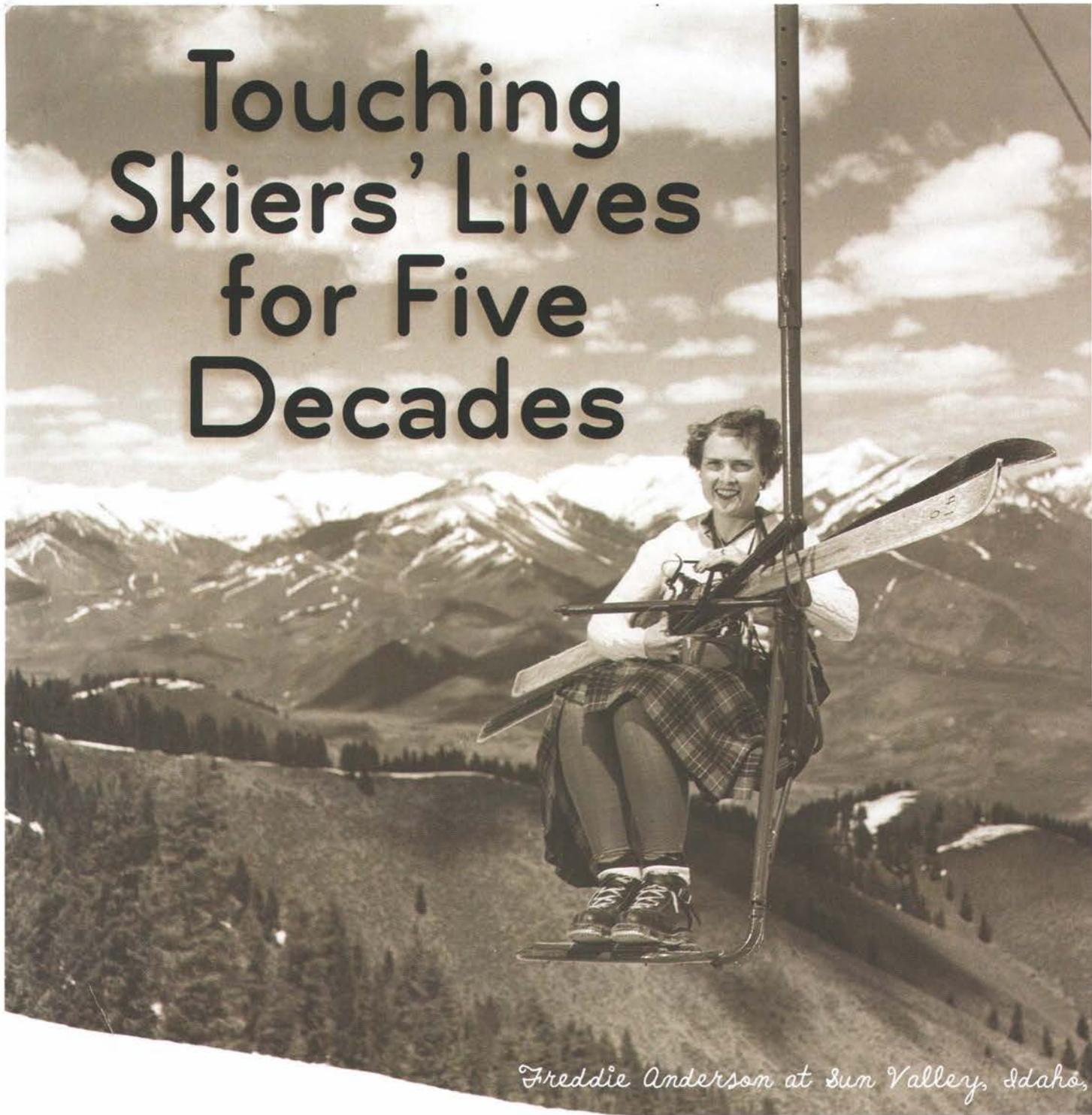
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FREDDIE ANDERSON

Touching Skiers' Lives for Five Decades



Freddie Anderson at Sun Valley, Idaho

BY KIM SEEVERS, PSIA-AASI EDUCATION

SON



in April 1952

COURTESY OF CHRISTINA ANDERSON

DIRECTOR

Makes the most fluid turns on the mountain? *Check.* Fabulous fashion sense? *Check.* Understands contemporary instructor lingo? *Check.* First one to the slopes in the morning and last one to leave at night? *Check.*

It makes sense that someone with this much flair and excitement for skiing is another candidate for *The Professional Skier* feature on rising young superstars (see page 10). A superstar, yes, although you'd be hard pressed to get her to describe herself as such. Young, well, that's a stretch, but she's definitely young at heart. This luminary of ski teaching is Frederica "Freddie" Anderson, 87 years old and still going strong.

Four women take to the tennis courts on a hot summer day for a leisurely game of doubles. One woman serves and an energetic volley ensues. The youngest member of the group smiles knowingly as a return comes right to her strength. She nails a forehand, fully expecting her shot to get by the opponent at the net for a point. However, her smile soon turns to a look of terror as she realizes that what she thought was a sure bet is about to be slammed back at her feet by Freddie Anderson, who roams the other side of the net. Freddie zeros in on the ball, cocks her racquet, and smashes back the winner. She punctuates the culmination of the rally with a little victory jig that belies the fact that she's well into her eighth decade!

Equally at home on the ski slopes as on the tennis courts, Freddie Anderson may very well be the matriarch of ski teaching in PSIA's Eastern division. She has been skiing since she was three years old (that's 1924 for anyone who's counting), has been teaching since 1938 (the year nylon stockings were invented), and has been the director—as well as a trainer, instructor, and chief bottle washer—for the Schenectady Ski School at Maple Ski Ridge for 58 continuous years. In fact, she was the one who founded the school.



COURTESY OF CHRISTINA ANDERSON

It's a typical Saturday afternoon of skiing and riding at Maple Ski Ridge, a small, family-owned area in upstate New York. A couple hundred children, as well as the occasional adult, traverse the 200 vertical feet of terrain with their ski and snowboard instructors. It's about halfway through the lesson time and kids all over the mountain suddenly throw on the brakes and come to a stop, gazing expectantly at their instructor. Out of every instructor parka comes a roll of Life Savers®, a Schenectady Ski School tradition for, well, forever. Kids jockey into position to see what flavor Life Saver is coming up next and to ask for that one. During a Life Saver break there's a fine line between being nice to the other kids in the class and being selfish. (By the way, Life Savers were first wrapped in aluminum foil in 1925, a year after Freddie started skiing.) In half an hour Freddie will sound one blast from an air horn and a new wave of children will take the places of those who have finished with their lessons for the day.

Freddie began teaching lessons for friends and neighbors on the Schenectady Municipal Golf Course in 1946. As her clientele grew, she channeled her passion for teaching by founding the Schenectady Ski School in 1950. The school continued with lessons on the golf course, with occasional day trips to New York's "real" areas.

In 1967, a local Schenectady family built two rope tows and a small lodge

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on their farm, and Maple Ski Ridge was born. Freddie seized the opportunity to move her school to its present home at the Ridge and has been there ever since. The ski school now tallies more than 1,900 lessons weekly and is believed to be the oldest one in the country operating continuously under the same director—currently 58 years. Indeed, anyone who grew up within a 60-mile radius of Albany most likely learned how to ski or ride at the Schenectady Ski School or was taught personally by Freddie Anderson. The school's instructors are now teaching the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original students!

Freddie is an icon in the ski-teaching world, but she isn't, by any stretch of the imagination, the only one. As mentioned, elsewhere in these pages young up-and-coming stars in PSIA-AASI are spotlighted. Fortunately for these kids and thousands of others around the country, there are people like Freddie who have taken the time to mentor them and to pass along a passion for teaching others to love our sport.

Freddie comes by her enthusiasm naturally. Her parents were winter sports devotees at the turn of the century (1900, not 2000!) and had their daughter out on skis at age three. Enlisted to be a student instructor in a physical education class at Massachusetts's Smith College, Freddie launched her teaching

career in 1938. (That same year, Orson Welles' radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* was broadcast, causing mass panic in the eastern United States.) Fortunately for PSIA, and for all the students and instructors she's influenced through the years, Freddie has never stopped teaching. Certification became a goal and in 1946 (the year the first bikinis went on sale in Paris), Freddie earned the New York State Ski Instructor badge. She continued to teach and work and, in 1950, passed the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association exam, earning the "White Badge" of the professional ski instructor. In 1998, Freddie was made a lifetime member of our association, and in 2001 she received her PSIA-AASI 40-year pin.

In her early years as a professional ski teacher, Freddie had a vision that went beyond Maple Ski Ridge and the Schenectady Ski School. At a time when women were not generally accepted into board rooms, Freddie worked side-by-side with the founding fathers of PSIA-Eastern to form its first board of directors in the fall of 1973. As a board member, she helped her peers shepherd the fledgling association through some

rocky times in their early development and remained involved in board activities through the 1980s. As her zeal for ski teaching and her awareness of the issues of running a professional ski



COURTESY OF CHRISTINA ANDERSON

school grew, Freddie worked tirelessly to represent ski school directors and their interests in our organization.

The PSIA-Eastern examiner is running through a group split on an overcast day at Okemo, Vermont. The event is a women's seminar and the participants are trying to get themselves into groups of similar skiing ability. As her group forms, the group leader sees signs of apprehension on the faces of some of the group members; body language tells her that they're wondering whether the older woman in the bright red suit is going to hold them back. As the group takes its first warm-up

FREDDIE ANDERSON TIMELINE

1924 Freddie takes to skis at age three

- Cost of a gallon of gas is 21 cents
- The first ever Olympic Winter Games are held in Chamonix, France
- Band-Aids® are invented
- Calvin Coolidge is elected president



1938 Freddie teaches her first skiing lesson

- Cost of a gallon of gas is 20 cents
- Ballpoint pens are introduced
- Freeze-dried coffee is invented by Nescafe
- Average cost for renting a house is \$27 per month

1948 Freddie earns New York State Ski Instructor certification

- Cost of a gallon of gas is 26 cents
- Long-playing (33 1/3 RPM) record is invented
- Swiss outdoorsman George de Mestral invents Velcro®
- The Winter Olympic Games are held in St. Moritz, Switzerland

1950 Freddie earns the "White Badge" from the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association, founds Schenectady Ski School

- Cost of a gallon of gas is 27 cents
- "Cool jazz" gains popularity
- Diners Club issues first credit cards
- Formation of the Warsaw Pact in answer to the West's NATO

SOURCES: WWW.THEPEOPLEHISTORY.COM; ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION; WWW.TIME.COM/TIME/SPECIALS/TOP10

run, concerns are quickly put to rest as Freddie (a spry 80 at the time) sashays her way down the slope, demonstrating very contemporary and nearly flawless parallel turns on her new short, shaped skis. The trepidation turns to admiration as the others quickly come under the influence of the grand dame of PSIA-E.

As a student of skiing, Freddie has always made an effort to keep up with the most contemporary skiing and teaching



COURTESY OF CHRISTINA ANDERSON

One Saturday morning in February 2004, PSIA Alpine Team member Michael Rogan made an unannounced visit to Maple Ski Ridge. In 10 minutes flat, Freddie had about 40 instructors dressed and out the door for an impromptu clinic. Of course, Freddie herself was late. Why? Because in her excitement to be hosting a team member at tiny Maple Ski Ridge, she put the brace that holds together a badly damaged knee on the wrong leg! She finally calmed herself down sufficiently to get all her equipment on the correct body parts and was treated to a private 45-minute session with Rogan. Freddie talks about that experience today with the same enthusiasm she had on that February morning. Says Alpine Team member Megan Harvey, who skied with Freddie at the 2005 PSIA National Academy, "What stuns me is that at her

court. A pacemaker and two replaced knees later, Freddie understands that efficiency of movement is critical to her continued enjoyment of skiing. She's a poster child (okay, maybe not "child") for new technologies and for the ability of new skis to help a skier continue sliding into their "golden" years. Not content to live in the past, Freddie continues to attend PSIA events and to clinic with her trainers at the Ridge.

When you read the accompanying feature on young superstars of tomorrow, you might very well wonder how many of them will still be teaching 58 years from now. Will they still enjoy working with children? Will they remain as passionate about winter sports as they are now? And will they embrace the spirit of volunteerism and lead PSIA-AASI through the future?

Freddie Anderson didn't develop a revolutionary ski technique, she didn't write any books about teaching, and she never worked for one of the "premier" ski schools in the country. Instead, she has been content to remain at Maple Ski Ridge, influencing and mentoring the young instructors of the Schenectady Ski School. At 87, Freddie has helped shape our organization and has provided a safe, structured, and fun learning experience for thousands of children. And she remains as passionate about skiing and learning as she was 84 years ago. If only we can all someday say the same! ♦

methodology available. She's a familiar face at PSIA-Eastern Snowsports School Management Seminars, having attended for as long as the event has been in existence. Every year Freddie takes her place in the front row and listens intently as educational staff members talk about the latest and greatest in the PSIA-AASI world as well as the ski world.

age she still wants to get better at skiing. She showed me that, in skiing and in life, there's no reason to ever stop learning."

The downside of being around long enough for people to begin calling you a matriarch is the inevitable physical issues that come along with years of abusing yourself on skis and the tennis

1967 Schenectady Ski School finds a permanent home at Maple Ski Ridge

- Cost of a gallon of gas is 33 cents
- The first *Rolling Stone* magazine is published
- The first Super Bowl is played
- The Beatles release "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," one of rock's most acclaimed albums

1998 Freddie is made a lifetime member of PSIA-AASI

- Cost of a gallon of gas is \$1.06
- Low-flying U.S. military jet severs the cable of a ski lift in Italy and 20 people plunge to their death
- The Winter Olympic Games are held in Nagano, Japan
- The search engine Google is founded

2001 Freddie receives her 40-year pin from PSIA-AASI



- Cost of a gallon of gas is \$1.46
- 9/11
- Apple introduces the iPod
- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* hits theaters

2007 Freddie attends Ski School Directors' Seminar (as she has every year since at least 1986)

- Cost of a gallon of gas is \$2.81
- Apple introduces the iPhone
- Vatican issues a list of 10 Commandments for drivers
- Final *Harry Potter* book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, is published

perfect alignment:

when wants join forces with needs

WHAT MAKES FOR A PERFECT LESSON?

As an instructor, I envision a scene in which students are willing to try anything my coaching imagination can come up with, *and* each exercise and suggestion leads immediately to success, learning, and fun.

Our students, however, might have a different take. To them, perfection might simply be exploring an unfamiliar mountain with a local who knows where all the best powder stashes are.

The fact is, each lesson is a unique experience with its own measure of success, both from the student's and instructor's point of view. It's not uncommon for students to have a wide variety of expectations—reflective of individual *wants*—while our coaching instincts, training, and actions drive us to focus on student *needs*. Ultimately, the success of any given snowsports lesson hinges on how well we are able to align those wants and needs, making them complimentary focal points rather than conflicting forces.

When we approach needs as a way to deliver on what students want, we're that much closer to teaching the perfect lesson.

WHAT IS A WANT?

A want is something you'd like to have, but at a fundamental level is optional. We can survive without it but there's some craving, motivation, or perception that having our want fulfilled will allow us to prosper, succeed, or enjoy what we do that much more. I'm sure you've heard your guests express a wide variety of wants—from fun to funky, detailed



BRIAN W. ROBB

Students can't help but grow frustrated when instructors address needs but not wants.

to open-ended. The most common ones probably sound something like:

- "I want to handle the steeps better."
- "I want to have fun."
- "I want to be in better balance."
- "I want to catch huge air on some jumps."
- "I want some tips to figure out this new equipment."
- "I want to learn something today."
- "I want to keep up with my kids."

I definitely hope that students come to my lessons loaded with wants. In fact, I'd like to revise my introductory scenario of the "perfect lesson" to add that the students come to the lesson with high hopes and specific expectations, openly communicate their wants, and trust me to guide them to the outcome. I *want* them to *want*. While it's challenging to satisfy specific expectations and desires, it's incredibly rewarding. And besides, that's what we're there for.

Wants can be powerful motivators, largely because some very positive emotions are associated with them (fig. 1). After all, a want can be related to any one or a combination of the following:

- **Passion**—the students have a strong belief that if they get what they want they'll be satisfied or their experience will be enhanced.
- **Vision**—the students have a very positive picture of success.
- **Hope**—the students assume the desired outcome is possible.
- **Fantasy**—the students anticipate a fun, playful, entertaining, and magical experience with no negative consequences or limitations.
- **Reward**—the students expect to realize a gain, i.e., the payoff will exceed the effort.

Because wants are often centered on emotion, achievement, and positive expectations, they can be somewhat fragile. The last thing you want to do when

figure 1



someone professes a desire to achieve a positive outcome is to cast that want as being beyond the realm of possibility. Another surefire way to “crush a want” is to make it solely contingent on a need the students didn’t even know they had. For more on this, see the section titled “Avoid Being the Want-Crusher.”

WHAT IS A NEED?

In contrast to a want, a need is something you have to have. Needs are not optional; they’re essential for survival. In the context of ski and snowboard teaching, I think of “survival” as the student’s continuing motivation to engage, participate, and continue in the lesson process. Once that motivation is lost, the learning process usually stops dead in its tracks.

Compared to the endless variety of wants people may have in a lesson, the list of survival needs is quite small and universal. As you’ll recall from Abraham Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs” (see PSIA’s *Core Concepts* manual, page 35), people are driven by motivational needs that fall within the following categories:

- **Physiological**—having food, water, shelter, and clothing
- **Security**—sensing protection, a safe environment, and reasonable risks

- **Belonging**—giving and receiving friendship, love, and appreciation
- **Esteem**—attaining recognition, attention, competence, and mastery
- **Self actualization**—achieving growth and meeting one’s potential

As you move down the list, each becomes a more complex need (or set of needs), can only be satisfied if the previous needs are met, and is more difficult for the instructor to have control or influence over. Therefore, before you set off into lesson plans, progressions, drills, and feedback, take stock of the non-negotiable items you must address to promote a successful lesson experience. Perhaps it boils down to these basics:

- **Focus on biology**—keep students fed, move enough to stay warm, break often enough to recover, and respect when nature calls (i.e., plan on potty breaks).

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- **Focus on safety**—select the appropriate level of challenge, manage and mitigate risks, and demonstrate the Responsibility Code through your own actions.
- **Focus on the group**—develop a respectful and trusting environment in which all individuals fit into the whole and know they won't be embarrassed or humiliated.
- **Focus on the individual**—listen to, observe, coach, and praise each person.
- **Reflect on the experience**—use the quality of the experience and time spent together; sharing the pursuit of wants as a measure of success more than a specific outcome.

ALIGNING WANTS AND NEEDS

Because expectations are so personal, it may be hard, especially when your class mix is a group of strangers, to get individuals to share aloud or even speak one-on-one with you about what they truly want. That said, the overall lesson experience and your relationship with students depends upon being willing to solicit—and listen to—student input, rather than assume what they want, or worse, push upon them what you think they *should* want. By listening carefully for what your students want to learn in the lesson, you grow from simple coach to the guide or guru who will help them exceed their own expectations.

In your lesson introductions you likely create a dialogue that's intended to draw wants from your students and facilitate the goal-setting for the lesson. Perhaps you even ask the patented question, "Where do you want to go today?" I'm willing to bet you don't always get an outpouring of enthusiastic or concrete wants flowing from your group.

On the flip side, other people and groups respond with an avalanche of ideas that, considering where their current skills lie, may be borderline fantasy. When lesson success is predicated on

helping people with what they want, how should you respond to silence, indifference, or even over exuberance and unrealistic expectations? Let's examine each and come up with positive strategies all the way around.

GIVE A LIFT TO THE 'WANT-LESS'

Perhaps it's nerves, shyness, confusion, fear, boredom, or passiveness that's blocking your students from telling you what they want. Since it's probably early in your lesson, and your acquaintance with your group (and them with each other) has yet to gel, it's common for people to hold back a little bit.

In fact, upon applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs you might find that there are a variety of physical, emotional, or social needs among group members that need to be addressed before your students tell you what they want. One person may admit that he's scared or had a bad experience in a lesson last week. Another may be cranky because she missed breakfast or because her best friend got put in another group even though they thought they'd be together. Maybe one student is miserable because his left big toe really hurts in his new boots. The point is, none of these students can focus on "where they want to go" when something is bothering them to the extent that they don't want to be where they are right now.

The key for you, the instructor, is to be very patient with the goal-setting process and prioritize the "people" process. If your group kicks off the session a little too shy to open up to you, or a bit indifferent to learning something specific, focus your initial activities on simply warming your group up. I'm referring here not to a physical warm-up but a social warm-up, in which they begin to build their trust in you as a leader and a friend. They'll also establish some familiarity and trust with the others in the group.

For example, if I have a group lesson where the goal is not obvious from

the onset, I'll ask permission from the group to take a couple of runs to get our bodies moving and assess the conditions before we jump into things. I look and listen to their response, checking for buy-in and perhaps even a sense of relief from people who are nervous about having their skiing critiqued. A couple of runs usually provides enough time for me to get around to everyone—whether it's during some quad-chair discussions or at some stopping points on the run—and solicit individual goals while looking for a possible common thread to these goals that would suggest a group theme. This warm-up time is well spent if you can make a connection with each person and them with their peers.

Then you can segue to asking a variety of questions and making suggestions that get your group thinking about the possibilities for the session. Ask them questions like:

- "What are the biggest challenges with today's conditions?"
- "Today would be successful if you could _____ [encourage them to fill in the blank]."
- "Are there any plateaus you're looking to break through today?"
- "What's the most exciting aspect of today's conditions?"

Offer suggestions and sell the possibilities, such as:

- "Are you all open to trying _____?" [Now it's your turn to fill in the blank.]
- "I love today's conditions and how they let me _____ [cite something fun]. Can I show you what I'm talking about?"
- "It's very common at this stage of skiing to struggle with _____ [cite something notorious]. Would I be a hero if I could help you beat that today?"

These are the kind of starter questions and suggestions that serve as the kindling

to the dialog you'll have with your group, which will hopefully uncover something of interest and inspiration. These phrases are open-ended enough to show your group that (1) you care about them, (2) they have a say in the process, and (3) the lesson is not a canned product. This line of conversation also shows that you're a pro and in the know of what's fun, what's hard, what's possible and, therefore, what's worth the price of admission.

You'll be surprised how quickly students can go from being unsure to being intrigued. You'll see it in their body language or maybe even in the fervor with which they take on a task. The turning point may be a question you ask, an idea you suggest, a conversation they have with another student, or something you all witness on the hill that entertains or inspires them. It might even be when their coffee kicks in. Or maybe, just maybe, they'll engage in the lesson when they see you ski and think, "Hey, I want to ski like that!"

There will be situations in which students feel as though they hired you as the "expert" and they simply want you to take charge and dazzle them with your best stuff. Therefore, while I stress being patient and developing the rapport needed to glean from students what they want, also be aware of signs—such as fidgeting and eager glances down the hill—that the group would like you to stop asking questions and just start skiing.

AVOID BEING THE 'WANT CRUSHER'

If you do get a flood of wants from your class, what do you do with all that information? Because of your experience, knowledge, and willingness to be a problem solver, you might come to quick conclusions (maybe even assumptions) about what is realistic and possible relative to the group's wants. If you fail to acknowledge and embrace student wants—shifting too quickly into expressing what they need—you may innocently "buzz-kill" those wants. While wants can

be ambitious, needs may dwell on those "boring details" that bring people back to earth or reset expectations.

A want-crushing instructor addressing the possible expectations listed at the beginning of this article might be overheard giving the following kinds of responses:

- "If you want to handle the steeps better, you need to spend more time on the flats."
- "If you want to be in better balance, you need to get better boots."
- "Before I let you catch huge air, you need to learn some speed control."
- "If you want to learn something here today, you need to pay more attention."
- "If you want that new equipment to work better for you, you need to change your stance."
- "You don't need to keep up with your kids, you just need to work on efficiency."

These statements are exaggerated examples of how a want-versus-need assessment can be antagonizing. But even a subtle approach to addressing student wants and needs can sour people's appetites for lessons. Why? Because when you say "If you want that, you need to do this" the students' fantasy bubble bursts before it even gets a chance to float. They may realize, with a certain amount of resignation, that rewards will come only with an investment of more effort, time, practice, and lessons than they expected. Some, perceiving that you're calling out their deficiencies, may lose self esteem and confidence. Others might think that rather than listen to their goals, you're asserting yourself as the ultimate authority on what the goal should be.

So, how do you address a need without crushing the want? Let's take another look at those six statements and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

changing movement patterns— it's not always pretty!

CHANGING A MOVEMENT PATTERN in skiing is difficult. We become conditioned to a certain way of moving, and even though we try to make changes there's a tendency to come back to the very same movement we're striving to change. It's our home base. We're comfortable there, even though it might not be as efficient, strong, fast, or where we want to be for whatever reason.

In order to break the mold, it's necessary to embrace the notion that things will feel strange and uncomfortable before they feel better. If during the transition period of changing a movement pattern, you feel at home and comfortable, I would argue that you are doing the same old thing and not really changing your movements at all.

Try this. Put this magazine down on a table or desk. As you read, cross your arms at your chest. This is certainly a movement pattern that you are accustomed to. Note which arm is on top. Now relax your arms by your side as you continue to read. Cross your arms across your chest again, this time placing the other arm on top. Chances are that it (a) took a bit longer to do, and (b) doesn't feel quite as comfortable and natural.

The awkwardness and deliberateness of this reversed arm-crossing is exactly the feeling that we must embrace as we seek to change a movement pattern in our skiing. According to "The Physiology of Motor Learning," an article by noted exercise physiologist Frances A. Hellebrandt that appeared in *Readings in Motor Learning* (Lea & Febiger, 1972), "Movements, not muscles, are represented in the cortex. Patterns are learned

and those patterns are peculiar to every movement." A reprogramming of how and in what order our muscles react, contract, and relax is necessary to register a new pattern in our brain. This is a very complex process.

During the initial stage of re-wiring our brains for a new pattern, performance will be inconsistent and movements will be slow, jerky, or uncoordinated. The movement pattern is so new that it is too thoughtful and deliberate to be fluid and efficient. It is in this stage that perseverance is essential as we tolerate less-than-comfortable sensations with the goal in mind of improved performance down the road. Take this message to heart yourself, but also pass it along to students—especially those who are struggling with tweaks to their technique or feel that they're not progressing as fast as they'd like.

Consider professional golfer Tiger Woods for inspiration. There was a period in which he was making a fairly significant change to his swing. During the transition, he hit the ball with less accuracy and his scores suffered as a result. He understood that when he mastered the new pattern of movement and it became automatic—versus thoughtfully executed—he would be again on top of his game. Woods spent countless hours practicing the correct pattern of movements. His new swing was successful on the practice range long before he could rely on it when teeing off in a big tournament. In other words, he mastered the new movement or skill in an isolated environment before he mastered it in the dynamic environment of his game.

Changing our movement patterns can be downright frustrating. We may have successes when changing one aspect of a movement while failing to adapt other, subsequent patterns to that new movement—with performance temporarily suffering as a result. Fear not. With persistence, the change will come and confidence will increase. Over time, less attention will be devoted to *how* to execute the movement, and strategy and tactics will come to the forefront.

A U.S. Ski Team women's coach once told me that from the time a ski racer is introduced to a new movement to the time that she actually has ownership of the movement is about one year. The athlete may reprogram the movement on gentle terrain at slow speeds, but lack the ability to make the movement on aggressive terrain. Eventually she masters the aggressive terrain, then high speeds, then icy conditions. It all comes together after countless hours of practicing the correct movements. So if it ever feels like it's taking a long time for you (or a student) to master a particular movement, take comfort in how long the process sometimes takes for elite athletes—who train for performance enhancement nearly every day of their lives!

It is paramount to get feedback about the accuracy of the change in movement. That may be from a trusted coach, from video, from your skis themselves, or from your own proprioception—depending on where you are in the learning process. In the earliest stage, external feedback is critical.

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it's hip to think **hips**, even if you're a fan of the ankles

DO SKIING MOVEMENTS ORIGINATE IN the ankles . . . the hips . . . the mind?

To all of you ankle-focused folks out there, allow me for just a moment to challenge your convictions. Don't get me wrong; I'm by no means disregarding the important role the ankles play in every aspect of skiing. I'd just like to suggest that there is another way to look at the topic of where movements originate when we ski. And this alternate viewpoint might be especially beneficial for those students who just don't get it when you emphasize subtle (or maybe not so subtle) movements in the ankles as a means to control the skis.

In particular, I'd like to bring your attention to the hip region of the body and, specifically, how the hips—the inside and outside—flex and extend independently to help skiers maintain proper alignment. I believe it is in the hip region that most of the motion occurs for managing flexion, extension, and alignment.

Jack Cletcher, an orthopedic surgeon and PSIA-certified Level II instructor in Colorado, has extensively studied the biomechanics of skiing. He's also seen the inside of more hips and knees than I care to think about. He helped me understand some of the finer points of what is actually happening with the hips in skiing.

Cletcher is quick to point out that a person can ski with a fused ankle, because the hip and knee are able to make accommodations for the ankle's limitations. However, if you fuse the hip the person loses the ability to rotate, flex, extend, abduct, and adduct—with a

PHOTO 1



LARRY PIERCE

wide range of motion—one of the largest weight-bearing joints of the body. Flexion and extension of the ankle will not, in itself, place the skeletal components one on top of the other for proper alignment. But flexion and extension of the hip joints *can* produce this important physiological trait of good skiing.

The ankles have the least range of motion of all the lower extremity joints; however, they are extremely important in aiding the precision and fine tuning of alignment. As instructors, it's our understanding of *hip* positioning that may pay off the most for our students. What are the proper moves and positions of the hips in skiing and how do we help our students master them? That is what the following progression is all about.

Before delving deeper let me define the hip, as it relates to this article, as the region of the body from about the belt line to just below the side of the thigh. The hip consists of bone, muscle, and, most important, the hip joint, which

permits movement of the legs and pelvis in many directions. The hip flexors/ extenders are a grouping of muscles that cause the hips to flex and extend.

THE PROGRESSION

Okay, with premise and definitions out of the way, let's get into the progression.

Step One

While standing in an athletic position—with skis on and on a flat slope—place your palms on the front of your hips right at the crease between the upper leg and hip, i.e., the hip flexor (photo 1). A flat palm on the hip flexor provides a reference point, representing an extended hip. While maintaining equal pressure between both feet, flex at the hips and knees to squat down. Notice the scrunching of your hands as the hips flex (photo 2).

Now stand up normally and notice the difference. This motion does not require a fore/aft adjustment but a vertical adjustment, tall or short. This move-

PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



PHOTOS BY LARRY PIERCE

ment changed where the hips were in relation to the feet. If you were skiing in the extremely flexed, squat position you'd push your arms forward in a counterbalancing action to improve stability (photo 3). As an example, visualize a ski racer who is extremely low and flexed at the hips in the transition of a turn. He or she will be thrusting the arms forward. Of course this squatting action influences the amount of ankle, knee, and spine flexion/extension, all critical to maintaining fore-aft balance. The object is to be as centered as possible, and not be supported by the back of the boots.

Step Two

Now move to a slope with a modest pitch and, while standing perpendicular to the fall line, do the same exercise as in Step One—placing your hands on the front of your hips and flexing up and down while

maintaining equal pressure on both feet (photo 4 on page 34). Become aware of the difference between the two sides of the hips, uphill and downhill. One hand will become slightly more scrunched than the other. Once again, this serves as a sensory cue for one hip's flexion in relation to the other.

So that the angle of flexion at the ankles is the same, uphill or downhill (or left or right, depending on the orientation to the fall line), a skier simultaneously adjusts the amount of counter in the hips in relation to the steepness of the slope or for the degree of edge angle generated in the middle of the turn. On a steep slope the uphill hip leads, so that the skier can flex both ankles the same and achieve equal edge angles as a result. On a flatter slope less lead of the uphill hip is required to achieve equal angles of flexion in the uphill and downhill ankles.

The key is to have enough counter in

the hips in response to the angle of the slope. This helps produce equal angles at the ankles in the uphill and downhill sides. The uphill hip will be more flexed than the downhill hip because the uphill hip is naturally higher. If you flex and extend both hips equally while standing across the slope—that is, without accounting for the pitch of the slope—the pressure between the two feet would change. In fact, the downhill foot would come off of the snow when in the extended position (photo 5 on page 34).

When the weight is evenly distributed, notice how the uphill foot, hip, and shoulder are higher and ahead of the downhill half of the body as you stand across the hill. The hill provides proper alignment for free—a slight countered position—while you're just standing there. The key is to maintain this alignment while moving.

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Step Three

Now traverse the hill, moving from a tall, “open or extended” hip position to an extremely closed/flexed hip position. When flexing downward, work your arms forward as a counter balancing action so that your center of mass is generally centered over your skis. Close the joints like an accordion, paying particular attention to the closing/flexing of the hips. While continuing the traverse, stand tall; extending the hip joint.

Keep in mind, “tall” does not mean standing straight up as a tree grows. Rather, it refers to a stance in which you’re perpendicular to your skis. Move to a tall stance, working the hips forward in the direction of your ski tips across the hill. Propel yourself. Keep up with your feet!

The important point here, of course, is that you have to maintain balance over the feet in order to get maximum response out of the ski as you enter and continue through the turn. Some skiers will lever too far forward while extending the hips and traversing the hill, but that’s okay as a means to explore ranges of motion. Nevertheless, it’s wise to make the right adjustments to move

back toward a centered stance. Try this again and again, focusing on precision and paying particular attention to the alignment of your hips.

Adding dynamics and moving from a flexed to extended position and vice versa is often accompanied by a shift in alignment/structural integrity. Examples of this could be a pressure shift between the feet and a twisting action that produces rotation in the hips (but not hip flexion and extension used to maintain the proper counter relationship).

While moving through a dynamic range of motion in a traverse, it’s important not to exert too much pressure on the uphill ski and ski tip. Maintaining tension in the core will help you maintain the proper structural integrity.

When flexing and extending, the uphill hip should remain relatively more flexed than the downhill hip. As mentioned before, the amount the uphill and downhill hips flex and extend depends on the pitch of the hill and/or the amount of edge angle you wish to generate. As edge angle or pitch change, joints accommodate—through flexion and extension—to manage pressure through the turn. Try this phase of the progression on steeper

terrain to experience the subtle hip adjustments to a different degree.

Step Four

Now add more motion to the mix, ultimately forcing more discipline and precision in maintaining hip alignment. While traversing across the slope, transition back and forth between a tall/extended and squatty/flexed position. When moving from the flexed position, propel your ski tails off the snow (the tips remain on the snow) while extending the hips (photo 6). Then move back into the flexed position again.

The extension is a propulsion action somewhat similar to the sensation you get when starting a standing long jump. Don’t lift the tails off the snow by pulling your heels toward your butt, as this will put you in the back seat. Remember, the uphill hip at this point is extended in the tall position but it is not as extended as the downhill hip! With the tails of the skis in the air, you’ll be forced to maintain proper alignment. Imagine an airborne ski racer who maintains perfect form while in the air (photo 7, page 36).

The pitch of the hill, an external factor, determines how much the hips

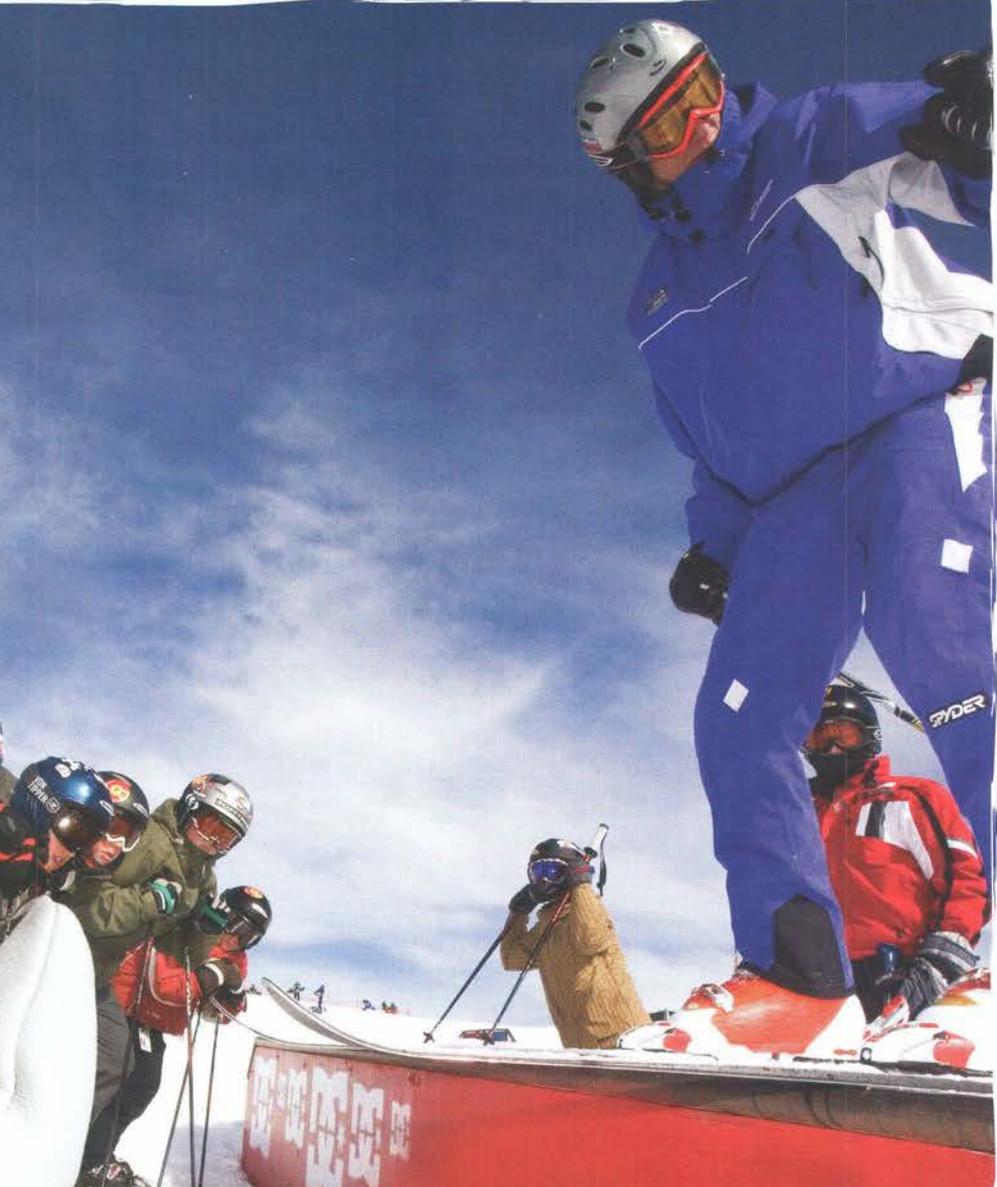
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PHOTO 7



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

are flexed and extended in steps 1–4. Generating a higher degree of edge than the hill gives you comes from movements the individual creates, or internal factors. While maintaining ski-snow contact with both skis, the more you flex the inside/uphill hip and knee the more your body inclines in relation to the hill. As a result, you need to develop more angulation. (Ah, but this is perhaps a topic for a future article.)

Step Five

Take the movement patterns emphasized in steps 1–4 into the exaggerated motion of the leaper drill. In this exercise, the hip extension, or leap, coincides with switching edges and transitioning into a new turn. You go from flexing at the finish of the previous turn to extending the hips while propelling the center of mass along the path of the ski, or arc,

at the beginning of the turn.

In this exercise, skiing basically becomes a modified walk. While in the air during the leap, you change hip position as when walking—what is becoming the new uphill hip (but still actually the downhill hip) moves forward and higher during the turn transition. Since you are no longer traversing it is at this moment in the turn—when in the air—that the edges switch for the change in direction. The leaper drill can be enhanced with a rabbit (a lead skier) in front scribing the arc in the snow.

FINAL THOUGHTS

For those wanting to take this progression to the next level, try driving the current uphill hip and knee into and through the path of the arc—initiation through the shaping phase of the turn. This will help you maintain alignment through the turn. However, for this to be effective you

also need to remember the importance of maintaining ankle flexion while driving the uphill knee forward.

Keep in mind that this hip focus isn't meant to replace or repress flexion and extension of the ankles, knees, or spine. In many respects it is much easier to identify our bodies' orientation to the slope and other body parts in relation to our ankles and feet. Identifying the proper hip alignment is complicated because the hip is so complicated.

Use this progression in concert with what you know and teach. Now, however, you might be in a better position to understand the hips and the central role they play in skiing. ♦

Deb Armstrong is the alpine technical director of the Steamboat Ski and Snowboard School in Colorado. She is also a member of the PSIA Alpine Team.

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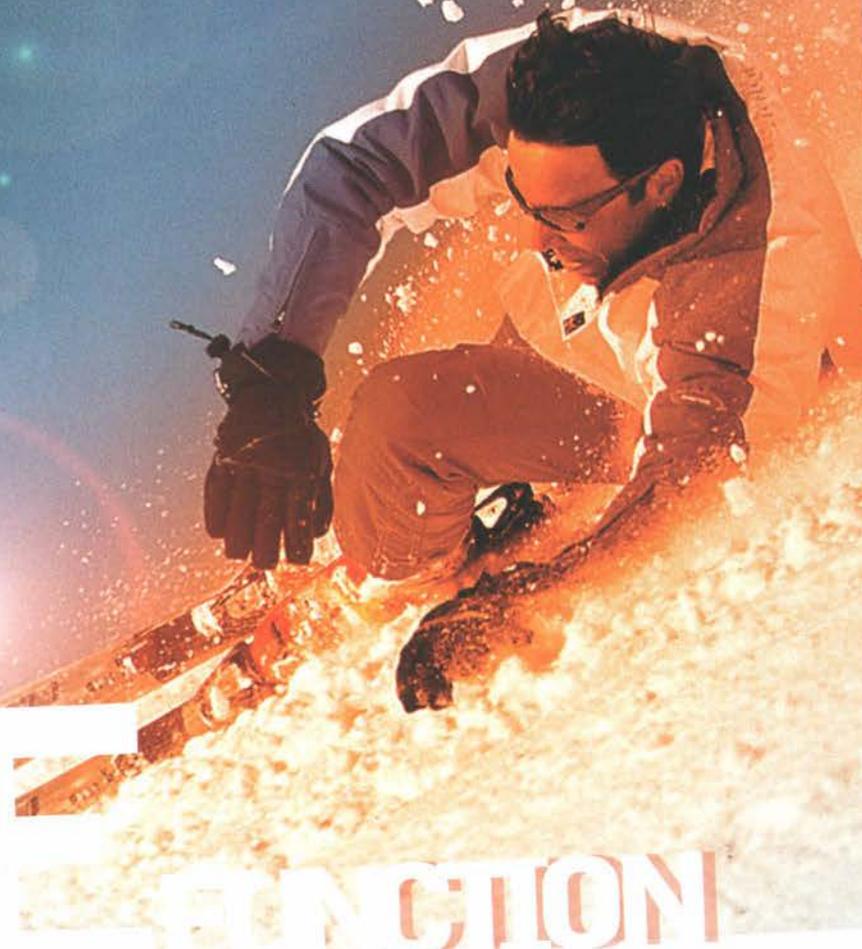
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big air starts with small air (to avoid big error)

TO YOUNG FREESTYLE SKIERS—who envision themselves performing perhaps a cork, rocket air, or iron cross with a tail grab—getting big air and scoring long hang times is what it's all about. But in order to get big air, these hot dogs first have to master the skills of getting small air. A fun lesson that emphasizes basic jumping skills perfected on small features will go a long way toward preparing students to fly the friendly skies.

Before the lesson, do a little preparation of your own by cruising the terrain park in search of relatively small jumps with mild lips (fig. 1). These provide the perfect training ground for straight-air, the goal of the lesson. As you test these jumps yourself, try to get a feel for the appropriate approach speed for the roll-in to the jump as well as the condition of the landing zone.

A well-structured lesson should cover the approach, takeoff, maneuver, and landing (ATML), but in an elementary way—at least until your class gets the feel of beginning jumping. For newbies, a cruising altitude of about 1 foot is attainable, but trying to fly higher than that can be too scary at first. A gentle roll-in (i.e., approach zone) serves to keep the student from generating too much speed in the approach, while a mild lip helps yield a controlled takeoff and comfortable jump height. A relatively wide and smooth landing zone will make it easier to complete the air in style. Starting out on appropriate terrain breeds confidence and helps students anchor the skills necessary for bigger jumps.

Before I get into some specifics of beginner straight-air, some housekeep-



The author (third from the right) poses with some of his young freestyle posse.

ing reminders are in order. These days many skiers prefer to wear a helmet, especially in freestyle settings. For more information on helmet considerations, consult the National Ski Area Association's Lids on Kids website (www.lidsonkids.org). Also, each of your students should have a working knowledge of terrain park etiquette, including the hand signals used to indicate whether the jump is clear. Remind students to exit the ramp area immediately after their maneuver and ski to a designated area out of the main traffic lane. In addition, caution them that if they fall they should recover and move away as quickly as possible. Check out www.terrainparksafety.org (and refer students to the site) for other important safety tips.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

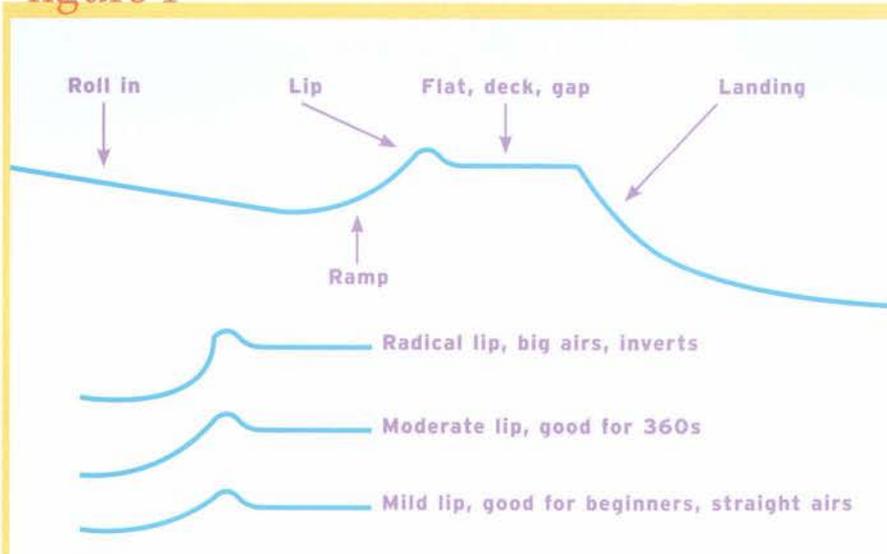
A picture, as they say, is worth a thousand words, so let's analyze the technique and tactics—both good and not so good—of some skiers in action (or

stop-action, to be more precise). Photo sequence 1a–h shows the essence of a properly executed straight air jump. The skier in photo 1a is approaching the jump at moderate speed after slightly braking with a wedge. The wedge is an excellent speed adjustment technique for the roll-in phase, requiring little upper body movement and allowing a quick return to the jump position.

The skier is moderately flexed with his center of mass (CM) neutral over



figure 1



the skis (photo 1b). With the advent of shaped skis, a slight edge may be helpful to keep the skis stable at the roll-in. By the time the skier reaches the ramp phase, the appropriate speed should have been achieved and the wedged skis changed to parallel. For this basic maneuver, flat skis at the jump lip are desirable, being easier to master. Edging skis at the lip is reserved for more advanced moves, which may require a more stable platform for rotary tricks.

As the skier travels up the ramp, his center of mass is neutral with respect to the skis, but the axis through the center of mass (and perpendicular to the skis) is slightly aft of vertical (photo 1c) because of the slope of the ramp. He, no doubt, feels compression of the body here because of the change in direction of travel upward. In lessons for beginning jumpers, choose

a feature with a mild lip to reduce the effect of compression, which will be a strange feeling initially. As the skier prepares for take off, a forward projection of the body should occur (similar to projecting the body in a turn on the snow), which adds stability to the flight. Photo 1d shows the takeoff, which significantly affects the nature of the maneuver. As shown, the skier should be slightly flexed and perpendicular to the skis. Having the weight forward results in pitching forward, and having the weight back often means landing in the “back seat.”

Photos 1e through 1g show the maneuver, a straight air. Legs and hips are flexed to provide a compact position to react easily to corrections necessary to perform the maneuver. Some flexion (Photo 1e) is a result of the compression from the jump.

In photo 1g, the skier prepares for the landing by extending his legs and hips. The skier completes the straight air by landing with flexion to absorb the force (photo 1h). In addition, he rolls onto his edges to improve stability during the run-out. As can be seen, flexion and extension are primary ingredients in this move, as is equal weighting of the skis at takeoff.

TO AIR IS HUMAN AND DIVINE

There are many ways to teach students to do straight-air jumps. The following progression starts out with static and dynamic exercises that emphasize flexion and extension.

First, have the student flex and extend the knees, ankles, and hips statically. Check for a neutral stance during these exercises. Some younger skiers, or skiers of small stature, may have trouble flexing in stiff boots. As a result, they’ll tend to sit back, which can cause them to pitch backward at takeoff.

Next, have students practice a straight run on gentle terrain, checking to see that each student has equal weight on flat skis. Unequal weighting of skis invites a roll when traveling over a jump. Have students try out some narrow wedges to get a feel for the speed control they will need for the roll-in and then return to the parallel position (with flat skis) they’ll use when preparing to jump. Once they’re comfortable with this exercise, have them practice flexion and extension

CONTINUED



PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

PHOTO 2A



PHOTO 2B



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

dynamically while skiing over a roller or mogul. Caution them to avoid excessive extension in an attempt to get air. They'll achieve lift-off not by extending but by making proper use of approach speed and the lip of the jump.

Photo 2a shows a student practicing absorption while skiing over a roller. This skier needs more practice with flexion and extension. The skier in photo 2b is constantly skiing in the "back seat" and needs additional neutral-stance

PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

practice. One of the challenges of teaching the straight air is that you will be dealing with bad habits developed over the student's skiing career; habits that may not grossly affect skiing but will have a significant impact on jumping.

Once everyone has a relatively neutrally-balanced stance, it's time to hit the park and perform a straight air over a jump with a mild lip. Photo sequence 3a-e shows a young student who is inexperienced at jumping and is approaching in a cautiously slow manner (photos 3a-c).

Since he has approached slowly, he is on the verge of a stall (photo 3d) and flops over the lip with no air (photo 3e). For a first time over a lip jump, this was not a bad performance. It gave him the confidence to try for—and attain—more air on his next attempt. The forward stance in photos 3c and 3d is likely a result of anticipating the jump but getting to it so slowly.

Help students with these tendencies adopt a more neutral stance as they get more air. Otherwise, with such small jumps, the student will most likely land on the flat or deck, which yields a little harder landing than the normal landing area. This condition is mitigated by the small height achieved in the jump.

Photo sequence 4a-f shows an example of a relatively good straight air. The approach speed is adjusted with a narrow wedge and a neutral stance (photo 4a).

As the skier rides up the ramp (photos 4b and 4c), the stance is square (facing the direction of travel) and the skier is perpendicular to the skis, (even though the pitch of the ramp makes it look like he is leaning back.) The maneuver (photo 4d) is compact, with some hand adjustment to limit roll brought on by slightly unequal weight on the skis.

The extension looks good for landing (photo 4e), and absorption (photo 4f) appears balanced, although slightly back because of sticky snow conditions. This student has achieved the lesson goal to negotiate a jump under control, with an impressive 3 feet of air.

Photo sequence 5a-d shows a student pitching forward in the maneuver phase of the jump. The approach appears centered, but while on the ramp (Photo 5b), the body is nearly vertical, which places the center of mass slightly ahead of the boots. This causes a forward rotation in the maneuver phase (Photos 5c and 5d).

Encourage students prone to this misalignment to project the body forward but not overly so (i.e., the center position in figure 2). When the center of mass is too far forward, the skier will be pitched forward. When it is too far to the rear, the skier will land on the tails of the skis. Both concepts are important to grasp when performing straight airs. Note: While you can start out by emphasizing a neutral

PHOTOS 3A-3E



PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

PHOTOS 4A-4F



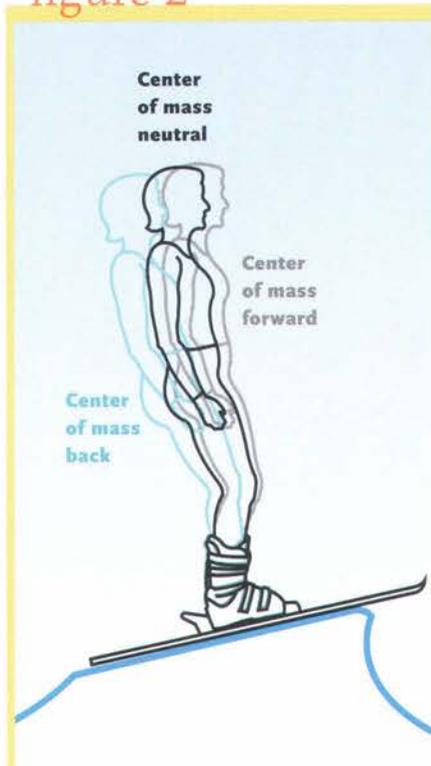
PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

PHOTOS 5A-5D



PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

figure 2



stance at takeoff, as skiers become more proficient with their straight airs you can help them learn to “project” their center of mass/body core into the direction of motion (much as skiers project their CM from one turn to another when gliding down a slope.) Provided they are “projecting” rather than merely leaning forward, they’ll be in solid position to land well and ski away clean.

Photo sequence 6a-f is an example of the skier’s center of mass being back at takeoff, resulting in backward rotation. The approach looks controlled and neutral (photos 6a and 6b), but near takeoff you can spot some slight extension, a shift of the center of mass toward the tails of the skis (photos 6c and 6d), and a lack of the flexed, compact stance.

This results in a tail-first landing (photo 6e) and a near loss of balance to the rear (photo 6f). It should be noted that this type of landing strains the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and is not recommended. With students who dis-

play these tendencies, work on a more compact and neutral stance at take-off. Again, skiers should attain air as a result of the lip and not from excessive extension movements. To give your students a means of instant movement analysis, consider videotaping their jumps or taking still digital photos. The student in photo sequence 6a-f is the same student seen in photo 2b, illustrating how a slight deviation from the neutral stance can have a significant impact on the execution of the jump.

SIX EASY PIECES

If you need a quick “cheat sheet” for teaching straight airs, here’s this progression in six easy steps:

1. Do static flexion and extension exercises; checking and correcting for neutral stance.
2. Do dynamic flexion and extension exercises (straight run); checking and correcting for neutral stance and equally weighted skis.

3. Perform straight runs with change-up of parallel to wedge and back to parallel to practice speed control.
4. Ski over a roller while flexing/extending and adjusting speed on the approach; checking and correcting for neutral stance and speed control.
5. Ski over a mild jump; observing take-offs and landings especially. Correct for backward rotation, forward rotation, or unequal weighting of the skis.
6. Ski over mild and moderate jumps, using video or digital still photos for instant movement analysis.

CONTINUED

PHOTOS 6A-6F



PHOTOS BY CHUCK ROBERTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

The straight air is a relatively challenging move to learn because everything must be correct at takeoff: body position appropriately projected into the jump, body facing the direction of travel with equal weight on each ski, and sufficient speed to clear the deck and land on the down slope. Some of your young students will be aggressive and try to go for big air

right off, while others will be timid and be happy with a “lip flop” on a first try.

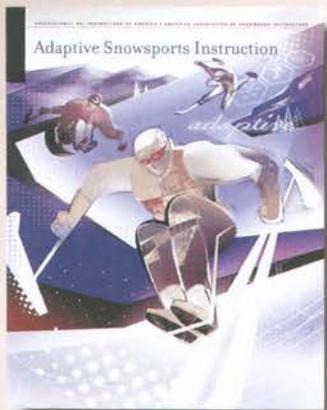
By the end of the class, you may see a variety of skill levels emerge, with each student working at his or her level. With the straight air mastered, your young students are poised to learn maneuvers with grabs, perform 180s (i.e., landing switch with the tails of the skis facing downhill), and even more advanced spins.

Yes, the sky is the limit . . . but first you have to make sure your students’ initial attempts to get airborne are safe and fundamentally sound. ♦

Chuck Roberts has taught alpine skiing since 1970 and snowboarding since 1987. He is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine and AASI-certified Level II snowboard instructor at Wisconsin’s Wilmot Mountain.

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...s completely to load the body. When the legs have accelerated and rotate to the shoulders will as the rider desires and is able. You can teach these movements through a series of on-snow rotations, breaking them down and then adding air. Teaching in this way will help your students comprehend the feeling of a smooth versus a choppy spin. Coaching them in all of their options is the essence of freestyle that we teach.

SPINS WITH GRABS

In every trick described so far, one of the common threads has been using pop to create rebound energy and flexing the joints to create a



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use focal points

to teach attention-challenged children

PLEASE HELP. That's the kind of message you might expect someone stranded on a deserted island to scrawl in the sand to attract rescuers. As I discovered in the aftermath of a particularly challenging lesson experience, those two words can also help snowsports instructors save the day for students with attention deficits.

THE NEXUS OF NEEDS

The beginner lesson—for a mom, dad, and their two sons, ages five and eight—started routinely enough: introductions; small talk; and the customary inquiries about student expectations, favorite physical activities, and whether there were any special needs I should be aware of. Nothing unusual cropped up, and the family was obviously excited and eager to learn to ski.

But as soon as we got out on snow, it became evident that this lesson was going to be notably less than routine. The youngest son was having difficulties with even the most simple of tasks, such as standing on one foot, making scooter turns, sidestepping, and jumping up and down in boots and on skis. He was physically capable; in fact his motor movements were better than average for a five-year-old. The problem was that he just couldn't seem to pay attention, and this lack of focus started to limit his progress and detract from the group's overall experience. It was pretty clear that he had an attention deficit.

I again asked the parents if there was anything I should know about their younger son. Had his school identified any learning issues? They said "no," but the child's behavior seemed to suggest otherwise. Of course, as ski instructors,



Given estimates that 3 to 5 percent of children have ADHD, there's a chance that at least one child in a random group of 20 to 30 students will have an attention deficit.

it's not our place to diagnose potential learning disabilities in our students. Rather, we're there to consider the difficulties they may be having and determine how best to help them meet their goals. So that's what I did.

Fortunately, we were still at the bottom of the beginner hill, right next to the ski school office. Halfway through the lesson I was able to snag one of my fellow instructors for assistance, which allowed me to separate the group and devote my attention to the younger son's special needs.

When I was one-on-one with the youngster, I tried to get a sense of what he wanted to accomplish, choosing activities that would support his goals. Moving away from the commotion on the hill, I broke tasks down into small steps, was generous with praise, and took frequent breaks to allow him to refocus his attention. We managed to make progress, and by the end of the lesson he was able to do straight runs with controlled stops (most of the time). I have to admit, however,

that the ongoing battle for focus made this one of the most frustrating lessons I've ever taught. Oddly enough, the parents were thrilled with how I helped their son. In fact they gave me what still stands as the largest tip of the year.

I was glad they thought their son benefited from my instruction, but I couldn't shake the thought that perhaps there was something I could have done differently. After the lesson I did what any self-respecting professional would do; I started researching. After poring over various websites, I came to believe that the five-year-old in my lesson probably did, in fact, have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Granted, much of the information I uncovered bordered on being overly clinical, but a picture was starting to emerge about this student's likely disability.

ADHD EXPLAINED

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder—commonly referred to as ADHD—is a condition that makes it difficult for children to control their behavior and/or pay attention. The disorder generally appears in children during the preschool and early school years and often continues into adulthood. The NIMH estimates that between 3 and 5 percent of children have ADHD. By extrapolation, that means that for every 20 to 30 students we teach, it is likely that at least one of them will have ADHD. Children with this disorder, the literature emphasizes, need help, guidance, and understanding to achieve their full potential.

ADHD is indicated by three behavioral patterns—inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Individuals with the condition may exhibit some or all of these behaviors, but keep in mind that all children are sometimes restless, sometimes act without thinking, and sometimes daydream the time away. As instructors, we should be less concerned with “diagnosing” ADHD and more focused on structuring the lesson to take into account the behaviors that affect the lesson and the student’s ability to learn.

REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

While the National Institute of Mental Health is a good source for basic information, the agency obviously isn’t in the business of *teaching* kids with ADHD, so I next turned to even better resources. First, my wife, a public school teacher who works with students with multiple disabilities. Second, Polly Pohlable, another special needs teacher who happens to be a children’s instructor at Ohio’s Mad River Mountain, where I teach. And finally, Scott McNett, a Mad River Mountain colleague with division accreditation in children’s instruction.

This research and ensuing discussion led me to those two magic words—PLEASE HELP—and a lesson approach that can significantly enhance the

P.L.E.A.S.E. H.E.L.P.

- PRAISE
- LOOK AT ME
- ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS
- ACTIVELY ENGAGE
- SIMPLIFY TASKS
- EXPLAIN AND DEMONSTRATE

- HAVE FUN
- EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION
- LEVEL YOUR EXPECTATIONS
- PREPARE YOURSELF

experience for students with attention deficits. PLEASE HELP is an acronym derived from the experience, wherein each letter represents a specific tactic to apply within the lesson:

Praise is a vital component of success in this lesson, so offer accolades for even basic accomplishments that might go unheralded in a standard lesson setting. Positive verbal reinforcement works

well, so praise students for successfully taking one or two steps up the hill using the sidestep or being able to glide down a small slope without falling. Add a bit of showmanship to your response—perhaps performing a 360 on the snow when they get a task right or falling down when they don’t. Trying clicking your poles together to mimic clapping. This can be very effective in a large class setting, with all the students clicking their poles in a snowsports cacophony. Be creative in using these visual or non-speech-based auditory rewards.

In lessons in which you’re teaching the child *and* his or her parents, keep in mind that parents of children with ADHD are often grateful to have help dealing with their child’s behavior. Be positive and direct with the child, but don’t expect parents to serve as disciplinarian. They may be counting on you to deal with the situation.

CONTINUED

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“Look at Me” needs to be specific, because these students will take you quite literally. They’ll look at your boots, your knees, your helmet, even your slight paunch. To focus their attention, give them very specific direction, e.g., “Look at my eyes as I speak to you,” “Watch the tip of my ski scoop the snow,” “See how straight the tracks left by the edges of the skis look in the snow.” And then when they do what you just asked them to do, heap on the praise.

Eliminate distractions from the environment. Find an area where there are few extraneous activities that might pull the student’s attention away from you. Lift lines, other classes, the bull wheel at the bottom of the chairlift, the ski school director with that awful bullhorn, and the ringing ski school bell will all be unwanted distractions. Remember, these students’ attention is easily drawn away from the movements and sounds on which you want them to focus.

Actively engage children with ADHD in the learning process to retain their attention. Pose specific questions about their experience and ask what they’re feeling, seeing, or hearing. For example,

Another way to **ENGAGE CHILDREN** with ADHD is to find out what their interests are and use that to keep them immersed in the task.

“Are you happy or sad?”, “Is the snow cold or hot?”, “Can you point to the ski lift?”, etc. The best questions use all the senses to engage them. It’s also a good idea to guide the conversation. Otherwise, these typically verbal kids might divert the lesson to tell you—at length—about anything and everything besides skiing.

Once the students are engaged in the task at hand, their attention may last for 10 seconds before you have to start over, or you may have them for 45 minutes. Be prepared to respond to their needs.

Remember, too, that cognitive, affective, and physical abilities differ with age. Children between the ages of three

signs that a student may have ADHD

Children, by nature, often have short attention spans, so how do you know when a given child has ADHD? Frankly, you don’t—unless the child or the child’s parent/guardian makes such a diagnosis known. That said, certain signs do suggest ADHD and may help you better understand the child’s needs. A child with ADHD

- has a severely limited ability to focus on a task for a reasonable period of time;
- is constantly distracted by nearby activities;
- doesn’t really look at you when asked, or does for only a brief moment before moving on to something else;
- constantly changes subjects when speaking or fixates on one topic and will not move on to the next;
- may appear as if he or she doesn’t want to be there, but in truth, it’s just that the child doesn’t know how to respond to lesson cues or interact with the instructor and the rest of the group.

—Bill Claire

and six may not be ready to respond to your question regarding hypothetical situations, while those ages seven to twelve probably will. The same holds true for visualization. A five-year-old may not be able to answer how he might look when performing a specific task, or know how to reverse a set of directions to return to a starting point. A ten-year-old probably can. A teenager should be comfortable deriving information and drawing conclusions from what he or she has experienced.

Thus, be sure you ask questions that are appropriate for the student’s stage of development. You might ask a three- to six-year-old, “What does the track of the ski look like in the snow?”; a seven to twelve-year-old, “What movements did you use that caused the track of the ski to look the way it does?”; and, finally, a teenager, “What can you do to change the shape of the track the ski leaves in the snow?”

Another way to engage children with ADHD is to find out what their interests are and use that to keep them immersed in the task. Perhaps they enjoy playing basketball. You can relate pressure

control or balance on the skis to how they position themselves and flex and extend when they shoot a three-point shot. Rotary skills could be related to pivoting the feet to avoid an opponent trying to steal the ball while they dribble, or the movements used when executing a lay-up. Similarly, examples can be modified for students who play soccer, baseball, or tennis; ride horses; ice skate; or do gymnastics.

Simplify tasks to boost these students’ chance of success. Focus on progress in small steps to achieve the greater goal—a fun learning experience for both the student and you. Break each activity down into its basic elements. At Mad River Mountain, we usually start students off on flat terrain with scooter turns performed on one ski. We demonstrate all the moves and ask students to move in a circle with only one ski on.

For students with ADHD, you might focus on getting the gliding part of a scooter turn right first, then steering the tips, then working on some edging movements. Start the students out with one ski only, having them use the opposite foot to push themselves along in a straight line. Once they can move the ski along fairly well with the opposite foot, encourage them to glide between pushes. When they can accomplish these basic balance and pressure

skills, have them start turning the ski around a large circle or figure eight on the snow. This helps develop rotary skills through foot steering. Next, encourage them to switch feet and repeat the steps to practice these skills with the opposite side of the body. Finally, ask them to put on both skis and use the edges of one ski to propel themselves forward. This final step will help develop edging skills.

Celebrate the small successes you achieve. Remember, anything you can do to improve your student's skiing while providing **A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE** will create lasting memories.

Or, concentrate on moving each ski one at a time up the hill when sidestepping, further developing edging and balance skills in small increments.

Remember, what might seem like a small accomplishment to you is *huge* for students with attention deficits.

Explain and demonstrate precisely and concisely what you want them to accomplish. Then repeat. Children with ADHD tend to be visually oriented, i.e., "watchers" in the PSIA vernacular. Help make a mental picture for the child. Ask these students to describe what they'll look like when they perform a task. Their attention spans are short, so make your directions clear and keep them simple.

Spend less time describing the task and more time demonstrating. Ski both toward and away from the student so they can clearly see the task performed correctly from the front and the back. For example, if you are teaching a parallel turn, you might start by focusing on the initiation of the turn by engaging the uphill edge, then move on to more complex moves as they gain success. Generally, you'll have to repeat the explanation and demonstration several times before they grasp the concept. Oh, and keep things moving.

Have fun, even if it means exploring some activities that don't necessarily relate to skiing. You may need to take a

break to spend a few minutes off skis building a snowman, having a playful snowball fight, or sliding down a small incline on your boot bottoms. Consider using these activities as a reward for accomplishing a defined task.

Extrasensory perception (ESP): you'll swear these kids have it! Children with ADHD compensate for the lack of attention span by honing their other senses.

If you're mad, they sense it in a nanosecond and mirror your demeanor. If you're frustrated, they will become frustrated. Always find something positive in the lesson to reinforce, even if it's as simple as commending the student for skillfully standing back up after a fall.

Level your expectations. What you deem to be a successful lesson may not be attainable. We set out to "STUMP" our students—but in a good way. STUMP stands for **set** the goal, **teach** the goal, **use** the principles of learning, **modify** as needed, and then **provide** closure. The goal needs to be relevant and attainable. Be sure to include the student in establishing the goal; which may be quite different from what you would normally try to accomplish. If the goal is set too high, modify it based on what is attainable.

Celebrate the small successes you achieve. Remember, anything you can do to improve your student's skiing while providing a positive experience will create lasting memories.

Prepare yourself for the most demanding lesson you may ever teach. But don't be afraid to undertake the challenge. Teaching children typically

CONTINUED



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

requires ample energy and creativity; the unique needs of a child with ADHD magnify those demands exponentially.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Taking the “PLEASE HELP” approach can go a long way toward making sure students with attention deficits get the most out of their on-snow experience. Because a child with ADHD tends to get the greatest benefit from a one-on-one teaching environment, you may wish to encourage parents to enroll their child in a private lesson if it’s economically feasible.

If financial or other considerations make the group lesson a better alternative, you can often integrate the child more fully by having him or her help “teach” the class. In other words, after you’ve demonstrated a movement, ask your student to be the first to replicate it for the rest of the group. Doing so will

also serve to keep the student engaged in the task at hand.

With a good base of understanding—and a willingness to craft your lesson to address strengths as well as potential challenges and limitations—you can provide a well-structured lesson for children with ADHD. Keep in mind that—in a group lesson—the other students in the class may find it difficult to share the scene with a child who doesn’t exactly “fit in” with his or her peers. If done with fun in mind, anything you can do to attend to the needs of the child with ADHD will likely make for a more engaging lesson all the way around.

For parents who are in the lesson or maybe waiting in the wings, be sure to reassure them that they have a great kid and you’re committed to making sure he or she has a rewarding time on the slopes. If you employ the steps represented by PLEASE HELP, you may

turn an ADHD-influenced day on the hill into the most rewarding experience ever—for all parties involved. ♦

RESOURCE

National Institute of Mental Health. “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.” Bethesda, Maryland: National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2006 (rev). 49 pages. Accessed January 16, 2008. Available as a downloadable PDF from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/index.cfm> or <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd/complete-publication.shtml>.

Bill Claire is a PSIA-certified instructor with the Mad River Mountain Learning Center in Ohio. He started skiing at age seven, began instructing in the mid-’70s, took a long hiatus from teaching to free ski, and returned to snowsports education last year. An engineer by trade, he is the CEO of a software and consulting company.

Take off their training wheels.



There’s a whole lot more to a mountain than bunny slopes and packed-powder groomers—decidedly much more. And helping students learn to conquer challenging terrain or tricky conditions requires specialized knowledge. This new manual can help instructors teach skiers to make the most of moguls, steeps, powder, chutes, and ice. *Tactics for All-Mountain Skiing* can be ordered through www.psia.org or the PSIA/AASI Accessories catalog. It’s essential reading if you want to help your students really take off and fly.



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It's time to drop everything and head toward the light. International flair is the hallmark of this year's PSIA National Academy in Snowbird, Utah, with course conductors from demo teams from around the world working right alongside members of the PSIA national teams. It's your chance to ski one of North America's finest mountains, learn from the top instructors in the world, and have one big, snow-inspired good time. The 2008 PSIA National Academy. Go to the light. To sign up now, simply fill out and return the registration form on the back of this page. Or visit psia.org for more information.



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PSIA National Academy

Snowbird, Utah. April 18-24, 2008

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration deadline is Monday, March 10, 2008

Event is limited to 180 people. If limit is reached prior to the deadline, registrants will be placed on a waiting list.

Attention Level 3 Nordic Instructors: A Nordic group will be available and requires a minimum of eight participants.

Open to PSIA-certified Level III Nordic Downhill members.

Full Academy Participation **\$1,035**

(Arrive April 18, before 6 p.m. Depart April 24, anytime.)
Fee includes lift pass, ski clinics, education seminars, six nights lodging, opening reception, five breakfasts, two buffet dinners, and closing banquet. All lodging is based on double occupancy. Single rooms limited, \$315.00 additional.

Resident Fee **\$575**

Includes lift pass, ski clinics, education seminars, opening reception, closing banquet.

Ski groups:

Academy ski groups will be defined at the opening night's reception.

Cancellation Fees:

Up to 30 days (3/19) prior to event \$100/\$60 (Full/Resident)
15-29 days (3/20-4/3) prior to event \$520/\$290 (Full/Resident)
No refund 14 days or less before event.

If a substitute is found, cancellation charge is reduced to:
\$50/\$30 (Full/Resident) up to 30 days before the event.
\$75/\$45 (Full/Resident) between 15-29 days before the event.

Release Form

In consideration of acceptance for enrollment in the PSIA National Academy 2008,

(please print name) _____

hereby releases and forever discharges Professional Ski Instructors of America, Inc. (PSIA) and PSIA Education Foundation (PSIA EF) from any and all liability arising out of the operation of sponsoring Academy to be held in Snowbird, UT, April 18-23, 2008. Applicant hereby acknowledges that participation in National Academy is solely at his/her own risk, and as a condition of participation in said Academy, Applicant agrees to hold PSIA and PSIA EF harmless from any liability resulting from injury or damage suffered by the Applicant as a consequence of participation in said Academy. Applicant hereby relinquishes and assigns to PSIA and PSIA EF all rights to the use of Applicant's name and likeness or pictorial representation in photographs, motion pictures, or other representations concerning Applicant's participation in said Academy.

I hereby state that I have fully read, understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

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Date _____

In case of an emergency, please notify

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If you have any questions, please call the PSIA Meetings Department, 303-987-9390 or fax 800-222-4754 or e-mail meetings@psia.org.

PERSONAL DATA (PLEASE PRINT): Please read the application very carefully and complete all information.

Date _____ **T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL, XXL - circle one).**
Name _____ Gender M F
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E-Mail _____ Birthdate Year (for roommate pairing) _____
Roommate: List name of preferred roommate if you have one _____ or Select roommate for me
Please indicate if you are a: Vegetarian Nonsmoker Smoker (We will try to accommodate)

Note: This application must be accompanied by the signed release form and full payment or deposit of \$520 (Full), \$290 (Resident), in the form of a check payable to PSIA Education Foundation. You may mail the form to: PSIA, Attn: Karen Hagaman, 133 S. Van Gordon St., Lakewood, CO 80228 or fax it to 1-800-222-4-SKI. If you are paying by VISA, MASTERCARD, DISCOVER, or AMERICAN EXPRESS, please provide information requested below. Balance of payment is due by Wednesday, April 2, 2008. PSIA reserves the right to cancel this event at any time, in which case all fees will be returned to the applicant.

If paying by check: Check # _____ Amount \$ _____

If paying by credit card: Name and address of the credit card owner is required ONLY if different from above: Please print.

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PSIA Co-Founder Paul Valar Dies at 87

Paul Valar—one of the founders of the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and a lifelong man of influence within the ski industry—died on December 25, 2007 in Franconia, New Hampshire, of complications of prostate cancer. In his 87 years, he racked up an impressive list of accomplishments, leaving his mark in the realms of ski racing and ski instruction. He was honored with a lifetime membership in PSIA in 1974 and was elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in 1985.

A native of Switzerland, Valar had a successful ski racing career and from 1943 through 1948 was a member of the Swiss National Alpine Ski Team. He first visited the United States in 1947 when, as a member of the Swiss national team, he competed in the U.S. National Ski Championships in Ogden, Utah. There he met Paula Kann, an Austrian-born member of the U.S. National Team, and in June 1950, the couple married and made a life together doing what they loved most: skiing and farming. They were both certified ski instructors and examiners for the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association, which later became PSIA's Eastern Division.

Valar was one of the leading proponents for—as well as one of the seven original incorporators of—the Professional Ski Instructors of America in Whitefish, Montana, in 1961. He was elected founding vice president and chair of PSIA's Technical Committee, and served in that capacity for 10 years. In addition, he was one of three co-authors, in 1963, of PSIA's *The Official American Ski Technique*, which laid out a unified ski teaching technique for the nation. Before that, each ski school taught the technique preferred by its director, many of whom were from European countries. Valar went on to represent PSIA at five meetings of the International Ski Instructors Congress (Interski) and served on Interski's board of directors.

Valar founded the Franconia Ski School at Cannon Mountain, and he and his wife also ran the ski schools at New Hampshire's Mittersill and Mt. Sunapee ski areas through the 1970s. In 1977, he became the founding president of the New England Ski Museum.

A celebration of Paul Valar's life will be held at 2 p.m. on April 19, 2008, in The White Mountain School's Great Hall in Bethlehem, New Hampshire. The family requests no flowers, but contributions may be made in Valar's honor to the New England Ski Museum, P.O. Box 267, Franconia, New Hampshire, 03580-0267. ♦

PSIA-AASI ANNOUNCE STAFFING CHANGES

PPSIA-AASI's communications and marketing efforts promise to reap significant benefits from two recent staffing developments. Joanne Corson, who joined the communications department in September 2005 as an assistant editor, was promoted in November to associate editor. A Colorado native and graduate of the University of Kansas William Allen White School of Journalism, Corson replaces Steve Lysaker, who left PSIA-AASI to pursue other opportunities. "Joanne brings great experience to her new role," said PSIA-AASI Communications Director Wendy Schrupp. "She's been truly invaluable in helping the department hum along and maintain its high standards, and we're lucky to have her."

The association is also lucky to have Blair Bucklin, who joined the marketing department as marketing coordinator in January. Blair, a graduate of New York's St. Lawrence University, comes to the organization after three years in the sales, marketing, and production departments of Warren Miller Films. "I'm excited to have Blair on board," said PSIA-AASI Marketing Director Andy Hawk. "Blair brings solid experience and a passion for snowsports, and she will be instrumental in the continued growth of our marketing and sponsorship programs." ♦



PAUL VALAR

DOROTHY J. CROSSLEY

Sponsorship Renewals Strong at SIA Show

PPSIA-AASI is pleased to announce the return of a number of Official Suppliers to the association as a result of meetings that took place at the recent SnowSports Industries America (SIA) show in Las Vegas, Nevada. Duofold, an official supplier of base layer products for 18 years, has extended its agreement through 2012. Also renewed through 2012 are alpine ski and boot partnerships with Dynastar/Lange and Nordica. Among other suppliers that extended their partnerships with PSIA-AASI during the SIA show are Booster (power straps), Dale of Norway (sweaters), Grabber (hand, feet, and body warmers), and Leki (poles).

Earlier this season, Swix extended its partnership as suppliers of alpine and nordic poles and ski and snowboard tuning equipment. Additionally, VIO joined PSIA-AASI as official technology suppliers of its POV.1 helmet-mounted video camera, and Blizzard signed on with PSIA as a supplier of alpine skis.

These suppliers join Subaru, Patagonia, Copper Mountain, Goode, Hestra, Highgear, Level, and Smith Optics, who have already renewed their partnerships with PSIA-AASI beyond 2008. ♦

PSIA-AASI Publishes Teaching Cues Card Set

Instructors who've put PSIA-AASI's *Alpine Movement Assessment Pocket Guide* to great use when assessing effective and ineffective skiing movements now have a valuable resource when it comes to recognizing effective and ineffective teaching. The pocket guide known as *Cues to Effective/Ineffective Teaching* is fresh off the presses and available through the online *Accessories Catalog* at www.psia.org.

This handy teaching tool comprises six waterproof cards, printed front and back, which outline instructor characteristics relating to four teaching skill areas—creativity, communication, knowledge, and process—that provide for a successful lesson. Similarly, the cards also point out—within these same four skill areas—instructor characteristics that would likely contribute to ineffective lessons.

The card set, item #17208, is \$5.75. ♦

get the skinny

from the best in the land

if ever an automotive analogy were apt for skiing, it really fits when used on the U.S. Ski Team's new interactive cross-country skiing CD-ROM titled *Cross-Country Technique Fundamentals*. A state-of-the-art reference for nordic skiing, this new interactive CD provides structure for organizing the instruction—an invaluable tool for coaches and instructors alike—and prominently uses the metaphor of a “gear box” to describe the division of technique for both classic and freestyle (also known as “skating”).

During last year's Cross-Country Examiners' College (a gathering of examiners from each of PSIA's nine divisions convened to determine standards for certification at each of the association's three levels), USSA Continental Cup Team coaches Pat Casey and Matt Whitcomb joined us at the event to provide expert insight on the current state of technique for cross-country coaching and teaching. They mentioned that they'd been working on an interactive educational tool that contained the same things we were working on at the examiners college, and now that tool is available to the general public.

The CD features USSA cross-country experts introducing and demonstrating basic principles and technique refinement for both classic and freestyle. The disciplines are further divided into a few “gears,” i.e., technique adapted for various terrain such as freestyle's three basic styles of V (“climbing gear”), V1 (“power and speed gear”) and V2 Alternate (“overdrive gear”). Instruction also emphasizes that the technique and the laws of biomechanics dictate that proper body position and timing must be maintained at all times before power can be applied effectively during movement

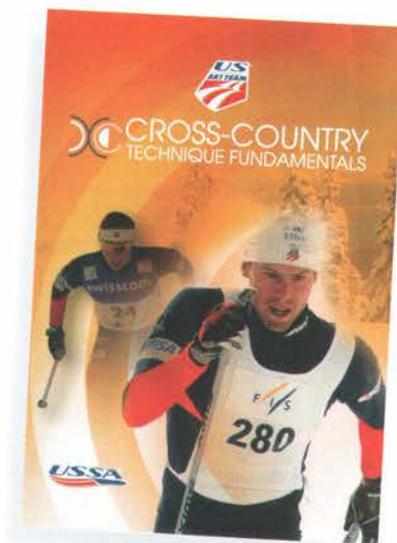
over the snow. Each of the “gears” contains a description for two or three key elements under headings such as “Body Position,” “Timing,” and “Power.”

After choosing between the “classic” and “freestyle” tabs on the main page, the viewer is offered a multimedia presentation, typically in the form of images with supplemental technical information. Presentations can include a 20-slide show covering everything from body position, timing, power, and drills for each of the three gears.

The CD highlights each discipline's gears by presenting drills and drill plans (similar to lesson plans for teachers). It even features video footage of USSA team members participating in World Cup races. Although the competition videos offer great camera angles and exciting footage, they sadly lack narration or any sound at all. For me, though, the clips are nonetheless exciting and demonstrate great technique performed by such talented USST members as Kris Freeman, Andrew Johnson, and Chris Cook. Watching race technique can helpfully clarify application, power, and transitions from one technique to another.

On the subject of timing, still photos accompany descriptive text—covering technical points—and videos feature slow-motion replay with additional graphic effects that draw the viewer's attention to key aspects mentioned in the audio narrative. The section on “drills” contains what I consider to be very successful visual demonstrations of drills and techniques, with accompanying audio that talks the viewer through each lesson.

Repeating clips and images of ideal technique and body positioning is a



tactic used to great effect on the disc's videos. Such clips have been popular with PSIA cross-country instructors for years, while newer videos represent a more recent emphasis on body position and movement of the core.

The disc's real “you-can-take-it-with-you” pieces are the related PDFs, easily accessed via the internet with the help of links that are part of the CD's Macromedia Flash presentation. Just one click and a new PDF will pop up on your browser, readily printable onto letter-sized paper. Printed versions of the lessons can work well for coaches and instructors when saved in a handy reference notebook. Additionally, links at the top of each of the online pages offer related information, and clicking the “more info” buttons will lead you to tab after tab of detailed information.

To sum it up with the help of the coaches who put together the disc, here are some valuable words of hope and encouragement for those who purchase the CD-ROM: “While the U.S. Ski Team emphasizes proper technique as the ticket to skiing efficiently, it also

emphasizes that skiing fast is first about fitness. From World Cup races to Bill Koch Youth Ski League races, the winner is always the fittest athlete. You must train hard, often, and wisely. However, it is not until the skier has mastered the intricacies of efficient technique that they will be able to pin their own speedometers. Put in the time. Get it done."

I think this educational tool belongs on the shelf (or in the player) of every new or seasoned cross-country instructor and coach. Its contemporary images, up-to-date descriptions of technique, and brilliant use of modern technology put it head and shoulders above any of the cross-country instructional videos on the market. I figure it will likely become the piece referred to by today's junior racers as they become coaches and will likely serve as a standard reference for contemporary instructors who join the ranks of the ever-growing masters racing scene.

So, I suggest that you head to your



Both a slideshow and an interactive technique resource, the U.S. Ski Team's CD-ROM on cross-country skiing spans diverse instructional needs.

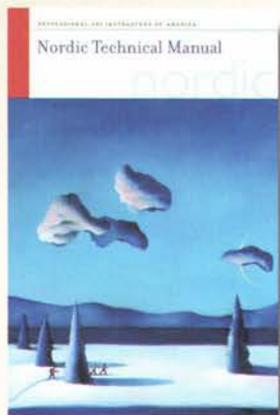
computer and buy a copy of the CD by visiting the USSA's product pages online (that is, go to <http://shop.usskiteam.com/store/home.php>, click on the "Education Shop" link, and drag your cursor down to "Sport Performance CDs;" when the new page pops up, you can scroll down to "Cross-Country Technique Fundamentals"—as far as I know, this is the only place you can order it at this time). Hopefully, you'll have a chance to step out this winter onto snow and practice new moves that will cement the

images from the pictures and clips into your muscle memory. That could carry you many kilometers with less effort and more power this winter. ♦

J. Scott McGee is a member of the PSIA Nordic Team and works as the training manager for the Jackson Hole Mountain Sports School. A former telemark competitor, he now dreams of perfect corn on spring backcountry skate ski tours. He also spends his summers guiding climbs in the Tetons for Exum Mountain Guides.

SOURCE: CROSS-COUNTRY TECHNIQUE FUNDAMENTALS

PSIA
Education
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item #133

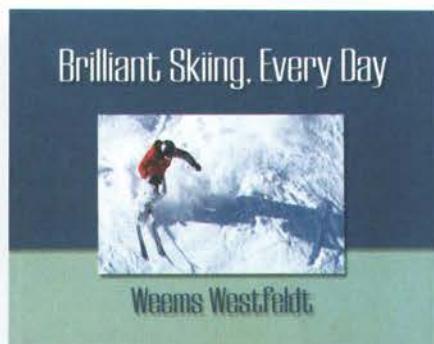
5,000 YEARS AGO IT
WAS WRITTEN ON A CAVE WALL.

FINALLY, IT'S IN PAPERBACK.

The snowsport that literally started it all is experiencing an amazing resurgence. Nordic skiing has come of age. And PSIA's new *Nordic Technical Manual* covers all facets of how to teach this age-old pursuit in a contemporary way. Extensively illustrated, topics are introduced by ski category: cross-country (classic, skating, and cross-country downhill) plus telemark skiing. Teaching elements include visual cues, skills, and "stepping stones" to lesson design, with numerous drills and exercises to use with students. Equipment charts and waxing information are also discussed. You can purchase the manual online at www.psia.org or through the PSIA/AASI Accessories catalog. You've already waited several thousand years, why wait any longer?

Nordic

a diamond shines brightly in pages of new skiing book



Weems Westfeldt. *Brilliant Skiing, Every Day*. Self published. 141 pages.

Weems Westfeldt's new book is as interesting for what it is not, as for what it is. *Brilliant Skiing, Every Day* isn't a manual dedicated to one special technique, a secret progression, or a series of magic movements that can transform ordinary people into wonderful skiers. It also is not a book with one theory that's supposed to solve all the problems that skiers face every day, all over the world.

What the book is, is a compendium of brilliant teaching tips—some hard-won and some shamelessly borrowed from colleagues, the multitudes of whom Westfeldt acknowledges in the book itself—gathered over the course of a 40-year career of teaching skiing. The best part about the book is that even in the face of a lot of information Westfeldt presents the material in such a way that it is easy to recall and use. (That said, I have to make full disclosure and let you know that I've known Westfeldt for 30 years and consider him a good friend. Know too that I wouldn't have written this review if I didn't feel his book was up to snuff.)

Brilliant Skiing is not necessarily a technique or a progression but rather a framework for looking at skiing (or

any sport, for that matter). The main idea behind it is derived from a research tool that was originally used to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. The Sports Diamond™ method, as Westfeldt calls his framework, is a basic conceptual structure used to solve or address complex issues, and it provides a means for us to make decisions as skiers. It suggests a way in which to manage and acquire skills, experience, enjoyment, execution, and, above all, the ability to make decisions about our skiing. It's a global approach that can help us create, maintain, and expand personal brilliance.

The Sports Diamond™ focuses on four elements: Power, Touch, Purpose, and Will. Each of these elements—represented by the diamond's four points—includes many aspects of both being a skier and teaching others to become skiers. Such terminology is best explained by this Squatty Schuler quote found on the book's title page: "I don't teach people to ski, I teach them to be skiers."

You are encouraged to use the diamond framework by "alternating with frequency and agility among these four resources without excessively emphasizing any one." Without emphasis then, the term "power" describes making the right move. It includes elements of technique, mechanics, biomechanics, movements, forces, fitness, and equipment. As a coach and a skier, I often spend a lot of time in this mode or arena.

The element of "touch" directs you to feel or sense what you are doing, and this can involve the areas of physical, mental, sensory, and spiritual feelings and thoughts. Touch can also encompass

your relationship with the medium of snow and space, along with the rhythm, flow, timing, intensity, awareness, fun, and joy of the sport. This might sound a bit cosmic to some readers, but a bit of cosmic thinking never hurt anyone.

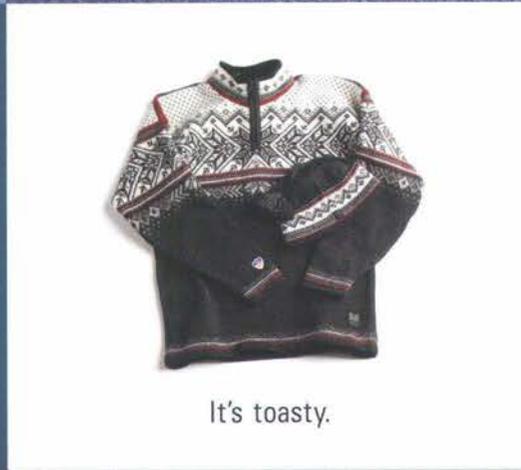
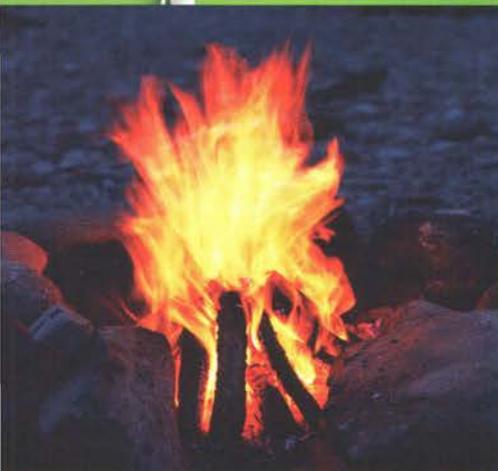
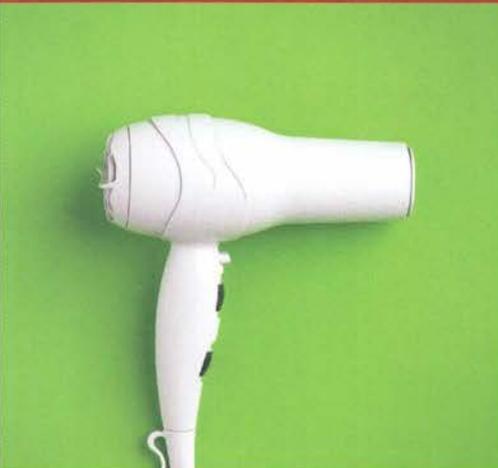
The concept of "purpose" addresses your intention relative to what the skis do in the snow. It's a descriptor for what you want to accomplish, the type of descent you intend to make, and can include your strategy and tactics on the mountain as well as creativity in executing these things. It's what you do when you "ski with intent" versus just mindlessly cruising—although that's fine too.

The term "will" describes your commitment, action, and choice. It's the sustained initiative of your run, and it is also about your ability to manage anxiety and emotions. It's a lot about centering and being present.

Have you ever spent a whole season getting fried while you hammer away at one aspect of your skiing? Or maybe you've given a lesson where you repeatedly banged your head against the wall with a student, exhausting your entire bag of tricks on a single technical essential of his or her skiing. Perhaps you needed to sidestep such blockages and keep moving forward to another area such as touch, purpose, or will. As Westfeldt says, "Keep your focus shifting so you don't get stuck in the mud. You have nothing to lose but your plateaus."

Will Rogers had a famous line about never meeting a man he didn't like, and Westfeldt parallels the thought in his comment that in more than 50 years of skiing he's never had a bad day on skis. He has had, however, many days when he has

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56



It's toasty.



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The PSIA Vail Sweater from Dale of Norway.
To order, visit www.psia.org or use your PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog*.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

skied very badly. You have to enjoy the essential optimism of this position, and if this way of thinking about skiing provides flexibility, diversity, and success, then perhaps you ought to take it out for a spin.

But where does *technique* come in? Half of *Brilliant Skiing* is about the Sports Diamond™ and the various ways you can navigate that system. The other half is a collection of pointers generally aligned with the four facets of the concept. Each pointer is easy to read and understand, and serves as “a cue for a single movement that in turn triggers a series of complex movement patterns in a way that bypasses thought.”

Moving from the basic to the more complicated is Westfeldt’s way of establishing a foundation of well-understood movements that can be made “automatic” in students before layering on more subtle and complex elements. If the student encounters a rough patch in such a progression, he or she always has the

foundation of the basics to fall back on for support while tackling the more exacting aspects of movements such as turns.

Even though Westfeldt dogmatically rejects dogma, he does make one major technical statement in the book: “If there is a single answer to the question ‘how do I ski well?’ this is it: Complete commitment to learning and practicing a smooth and simple release of the uphill edges of the skis as you initiate a turn, followed by an immediate and efficient engagement of the downhill edges as you move through a turn.”

Sounds good to me.

I noticed that the crotch on my pants lowered considerably and they BECAME BAGGIER as I progressed.

Years ago Westfeldt had a photo-montage of Ingemar Stenmark making a giant slalom turn mounted on the wall of a ski school he was leading at the time. Westfeldt’s caption penciled alongside the montage read, “Coronet Peak Ski School Technical Manual: Like this!” Weems feels the same way today about racing. He loves it, and he tells you so on page three of his book (that, and listing a couple of other biases too). He’s a writer who likes to put these things right up front.

At a time when many instructors seem to find World Cup ski racing too hard to understand or too divorced from our own reality on the hill, Westfeldt claims just the opposite. He insists that ski racers “produce the best model for recreational skiers of all levels and physical abilities to emulate . . . true masters at efficiently harnessing speed and momentum to achieve control, comfort, safety, and delight at *any* speed.”

I have been thinking about the contents of this book for a year or so and have been applying its ideas to my own skiing and coaching. It doesn’t matter if you’re into one particular school of thought with regard to skiing; i.e., maybe you favor Joubert over Witherall, or Austria over the U.S. Ski Team. No matter where your preferences fall, if you can put all of

the ideas and techniques to work while moving about the various polarities of the Sports Diamond™ framework you will end up with a more well-rounded global approach. And you can enjoy Westfeldt’s humor, tips, and anecdotes along the way. There are great pictures too—including one of the book’s author lounging barefoot on a snowy slope.

But don’t just take my word for it. The following is but one example of the author’s inimitable style as he describes learning to railslide with assistance from his son: “I was able to coach myself to a reasonable level without injury in a

short amount of time. There were some very weird side effects. I noticed that the crotch on my pants lowered considerably and they became baggier as I progressed. Girls with jewelry in their tongues started speaking to me. And now I wear goggles and a crocheted hat even while driving my car. Brilliant!”

Note: Interestingly, there is no publication date to be found in the book (perhaps indicating its timeless and ageless qualities), and the address for the publisher is similarly missing. To obtain the volume, though, you can go to Westfeldt’s website, www.edgechange.com, and purchase the book at the “instructor’s price” of \$9.95 (a hefty discount off the \$23.95 cover price). An equally brilliant DVD is available for \$19.95, plus shipping. If you’re more inclined to read material on your computer, you’re in luck because you can download the book for free from the website. ♦

John Armstrong is a past president of PSIA-AASI and the association’s liaison to the international snowsports community. He is the director of corporate training for California’s Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. Previously he headed Mammoth’s ski school and race department.



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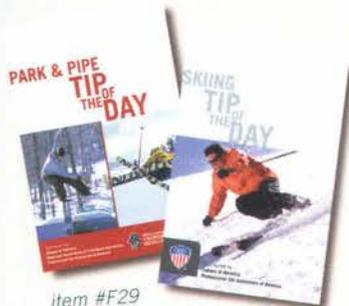
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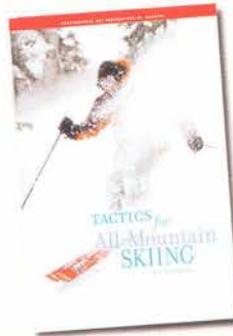
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perfect alignment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

see how the instructor might take a different, more supportive, tack while still focusing on a need:

"If you want to handle the steeps better, you need to spend more time on the flats."

"With a solid base of fundamentals, you'll be better equipped to handle the steeps and anything else the hill throws at you. So, let's spend a little more time on less gnarly terrain to help you get those fundamentals dialed in. Then we'll take on some steeper stuff."

"If you want to be in better balance, you need to get better boots."

"The ankle joint is really important when making balancing movements. Let's see if we can make some adjustments with your boot buckles and straps to get you in good contact with the boot while still having some ankle flex."

"Before I let you catch huge air, you need to learn some speed control."

"The thing about big jumps is that they come with big speed on the landings. So let's do some simulations outside of the park where I'll show you how to bleed some speed."

"If you want to learn something here today, you need to pay more attention."

"To meet our goal today, we'll have a few focus points that we'll work hard on, and then we'll have plenty of practice and adventure time."

"If you want that new equipment to work better for you, you need to change your stance."

"If you're willing to experiment, we can try a variety of stance options. You can tell me how your skis react to them, as well as which feel fun and which feel funky."

"You don't need to keep up with your kids, you just need to work on efficiency."

"You know, the trick to keeping up with kids is to be able to keep your energy and muscles fresh all day. I can show you some techniques and tactics that will help you ski more efficiently. Your kids won't be able to shake you!"

NEED DEEP IN WANTS

The "teacher" in us always has the best intentions for our students. Teachers are typically good problem solvers, but rushing into problem solving can put an emphasis on "problems" and the teacher's role to "fix" things. If you can change the point of view from "problem solver," to "want enabler," you can leverage the positive associations students have with what they want and recruit them into the process of fulfilling those ambitions.

If you reserve the "need" word for the set of needs all people can agree on (remember Maslow's hierarchy), then you should rarely, if ever, have conflicting points of view when addressing needs. A logical progression, the proper equipment selection and setup, a good stance, and efficient movements all contribute to successful outcomes, but will hardly register as needs from the student's point of view. They are all negotiable and your lesson can survive with or without them. This gives you flexibility on how and when you use them and how stubborn you should or shouldn't be.

If you can protect your student's basic needs, you will earn their trust and maintain a framework in which they'll remain engaged. Perhaps they'll be more willing to try what you're offering, listen to your advice, and solicit your feedback. With a little finesse, you can nurture rather than force their participation and investment in the process of developing fundamentals. Therefore, you begin to move further up Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow's Mountain) and the lesson experience starts to satisfy additional needs, including social belonging, personal mastery, and self-esteem—and perhaps a peak experience. Dare we call it the perfect lesson? ♦

Lane McLaughlin is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor as well as a member of PSIA's Teaching Task Force and Northwest Division's technical team. He teaches at Stevens Pass, Washington.

movement patterns

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

As you take ownership of the new pattern, you can monitor your own performance and better discern a desirable outcome. Once you've identified the sensations you seek, practice those movements over and over and over again.

Practice does not make perfect. Rather, practice makes *permanent*. We must identify specific times when practice is the goal (versus performance) and repeat the desired movement. A 1988 article in the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* ("Relationship of Practice Using Correct Technique to Achievement in Motor Skill" by M. H. Ashy, D.K. Landin, and A.M. Lee) indicates that (1) the total number of practice trials was not related to achievement; and that, (2) the total number of *correct* trials was related to achievement.

The implication of these conclusions is that performing practice trials without attention to correct technique does not improve skill acquisition as well as correct performance does. The authors further state that the best route for skill enhancement would be to increase the number of properly executed trials. They even go so far as to say that "incorrect trials are a waste of time."

That last statement lends credibility to the idea that to truly change a patterned movement, one must be willing to feel uncomfortable or awkward whilst seeking to reprogram. Without the awkward stage, status quo prevails. Change is essential if you strive to better your performance. This is the exciting time—it's well worth the struggle! ♦

Robin Barnes is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor, PSIA Western Regional Demo Team member, and PSIA Western Division Tech Team member. She instructs and trains at California's Heavenly resort, and is certified as a personal trainer by the American Council on Exercise and owns Tahoe Outdoor Fitness in South Lake Tahoe, California.

Write a caption
for this photo!



COURTESY OF SONIA ROM

You could win! Honest!

No, really, it was funny! That caption that just came to mind when you glanced at the above photo. (Not that disturbing remark about hunting endangered species; the other one.) Or what about that anecdote that cracked everybody up at après-ski last week? And then there's the great photo you keep forcing people to look at on the tiny screen of your digital camera. Wouldn't it look better in a glossy magazine? You know what they say; you can't win if you don't enter. You can't complain if you don't vote. And you can't rollerskate in a buffalo herd.

Winners for each category—caption, anecdote, and photo—will receive a \$25 gift certificate for the *PSIA Accessories Catalog*. E-mail entries are preferred and may be sent to tps@psia.org. Digital photos should be approximately 4 by 6 inches or larger at a resolution of 300 dpi. Standard mail entries should be sent to *The Professional Skier*, 133 South Van Gordon Street, Suite 101, Lakewood, CO 80228. Only entries from PSIA members will be considered.

WINNING ANECDOTE: Duke Millington, Moonlight Basin, MT

This past January, a six-year-old Florida boy named Tanner Page came to our snowsports school from Dreams Come True, an organization that helps grant requests of children with serious illness. He had never been in a snowy environment, so the wish he expressed through Dreams Come True was for his family to experience a winter week together in a western mountain setting.

Part of the week's activities included a morning lesson at our ski area. Although Tanner was still weak from past cancer treatments and operations, he was incredibly strong in spirit. Using a wooden pole for support and subtle guidance, he was able to hold on and ski by my side, learning how to turn, stop, and enjoy the rush of moving down a mountain. We skied together for the next hour, going the length of our long beginner run, riding the chairlift, and developing a special bond through crazy jokes and riddles. It was the most memorable teaching experience of my 37-year career, and saying goodbye to Tanner was difficult.

However, the family was back the next morning, having adjusted their schedule because all this boy wanted to do that day was ski. We went out again, student and teacher holding onto the same old wooden pole. This time we skied to the high-speed lift, which took us near the top of the mountain. As we skied by a wind-blown outcropping, we stopped to pick up a small rock as a souvenir.

When we returned to the base area, the family was there to take pictures of us skiing down. Coming to a stop, Tanner reached into his pocket and handed the rock to his dad, saying, "This came from the top of the mountain." The look on the faces of his dad, mother, and sister summed up their incredulous joy. Although this boy may never have the opportunity to go to the top of the mountain again, he and I will carry the memory forever.

For more on Tanner and his trip to Montana, see www.tannerpage.com. ♦

parting shot



J. SCOTT MCGEE

winning captions

WINTER
2008

THE WINNER

Okay, so is this what you mean by getting a "jumpstart" on the ski season?!

—Bruce Endline, Boyne Mountain, MI

Runners-up

1. Do you think our Kinder Ski School Program went too far when they introduced off-season, dryland balance drill training?
—Tom Gosiorowski, Mad River Mountain, OH
2. The skiers' version of the "bouncy chair" for toddlers. Typically used by parents to promote balance and leg strength—and for keeping kids busy so they can get some housework done!
—Jim Pottinger, Seven Springs, PA
3. "Good grief, Dad! I know you're a ski instructor and all, but it's the Fourth of July. I just want to see the fireworks tonight!"
—Jeff McWilliams, Massanutten Resort, VA
4. Always thinking ahead, Sarah decides to start practicing her "silly human tricks" for a future Level III exam.
—Greg Gramas, Stowe Mountain Resort, VT
5. "Um . . . Dad? Did you tune these skis before we came out here?"
—Michael Zeugin, Whiteface Mountain, NY

Actual Caption

Clara McGee, the daughter of Nordic Team member J. Scott McGee, takes summer dryland and nordic jibbin' training seriously!

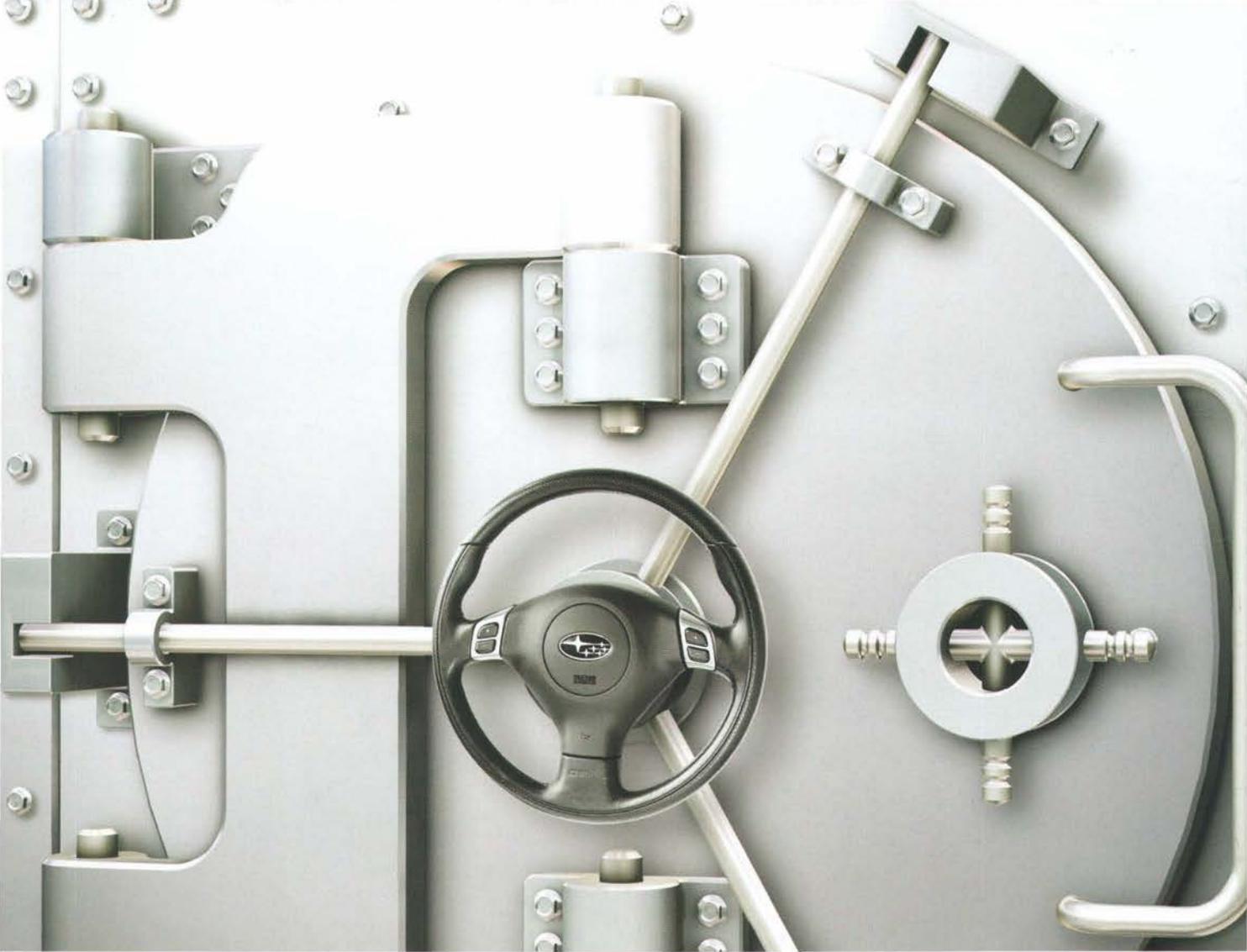


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