



new england NORDIC NEWS

EARLY FALL 1999 VOL. 4, NO. 6

“GAINING MORE GROUND” COACHES’ CLINIC

Vladimir Smirnov told us the story of how he went for a long fishing trip with Vegard Ulvang in the mid '90s, and how Smirre asked Vegard by the campfire one night, “Why is it that you do not fall down, completely exhausted, at the finish line as Bjørn does?” Vegard answered, “For the same reason you don’t.” Smirre found this inspirational and went on to become Bjørn Daehlie’s toughest competitor and for a number of years the toughest man in the world, mentally as well as physically.

Hearing Smirre talk about his skiing history during a freewheeling question and answer session moderated by John Caldwell was a highlight of NENSA’s second annual coaches’ clinic. Sitting on John Caldwell’s other side was Nikolai Anikin, who had grown up in Siberia and been an Olympic medalist before becoming head coach of the Soviet team and Smirre’s coach. The crowd of over 65 coaches and competitors heard Smirre talk about growing up in a family of ten in a two-room house in Kazakhstan that the family shared with their cow, pigs, and chickens. Smirre began cross country skiing at age 12 and decided at age 17 that he wanted to be an Olympic champion. Nikolai used Smirre as a perfect example of how a champion in cross country skiing is years in the making — he told the story of how Smirre had told the Soviet coaches early in the '87-88 season that he thought he would give up cross country ski racing because he wasn't progressing as he had hoped he would. The Soviet coaches persuaded him to train hard for the rest of that season and compete in the 1988 Olympics, where he won two silver medals and one bronze. The rest is skiing history. Smirre later told us which two races of his racing career he most likes to remember: the 1994 Olympic 50 kilometer classic race which he won, thus fulfilling his biggest dream; and the 1993 Falun World Championship men's pursuit race where Bjørn Daehlie beat him at the finish line by a foot length “because it was a physical fight for the whole race.”

How could we be so fortunate to spend the weekend with the very best in the cross country ski world? In his second year of retirement from ski racing, Vladimir Smirnov hoped to visit the US to improve his English so he could begin to coach clinics in English as well as in Swedish, German and Russian. Len Johnson of V2/Jenex, a friend of Smirre’s, assisted him in making the arrangements to travel with his wife and little daughters to New England. John Caldwell invited his long-time friend Nikolai Anikin, club coach with Gitchi Gummi Sport Association in northern Michigan (where he is now a capitalist landowner, he jokingly says), to come join Smirre at the NENSA clinic. So Nikolai drove East with Bruce Bauer of Gitchi Gummi to participate in the NENSA camp, then headed back to Michigan with Smirre and his family to do a clinic for Gitchi Gummi.

We quickly became a close-knit group by sharing the bunk rooms, doing Fred Griffin’s torture stretching sessions and 6AM runs, and eating all our meals together. The majority of coaches came from the New England states and New York, but two came from as far away as Minnesota and North Carolina. Dick Taylor, Bob Gray and Dorcas Wonsavage, former Olympic athletes, now New England coaches, mingled with coaches who were fairly new to cross country skiing and hoping to learn as much as they could to take back to their teams. Coaches forged new friendships and made valuable professional connections. Nikolai and Smirre were both very friendly and welcomed any and all questions from clinic participants. “It was an exciting group of coaches to work with,” said NENSA executive director Fred Griffin at the conclusion of the weekend. “They were focused from day one. It was like they were on a mission. They absorbed everything we put in front of them and applied it in our hands-on sessions.”

Classroom sessions on nutrition and a psychological performance inventory were balanced with discussions such as “Practical solutions for contemporary issues in nordic skiing” led by Dr. Ken Rundell of the Lake Placid Olympic Training Center, and the presentation of “A Model for Athlete Development” by Max Cobb, Program Director for the US Biathlon Association. Then there were the hands-on sessions such as Fred’s stretching routines and Biathlon’s infrared marksmanship, a new computer-assisted way of bringing biathlon demonstrations conveniently and safely to the public. The best part of the weekend was devoted to ski technique, with the participants divided into three groups which circulated through dryland and roller ski technique drills with masters Nikolai Anikin, Vladimir Smirnov, Miles Minson and Zach Caldwell. At one

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NEW ENGLAND NORDIC NEWS

NENN is published six times a year as a membership benefit of the New England Nordic Ski Association.

If you are not yet a NENSA member, please join

— support nordic skiing in New England!

To request a NENSA membership application, contact the NENSA Administrative Office. For fastest processing, send your membership fee in with your request for the membership form — as of 4/25/99, it's \$30 for the first member of the family (\$40 if not affiliated with a club), and \$20 for each additional family member (\$30 if not club-affiliated), payable to NENSA. When you return the signed membership form, you'll receive the NENSA competition guide and other membership benefits.

For information about life membership in NENSA, contact the Administrative Office.

DEADLINES

Articles and pictures submitted for publication in NENN must be in the editors' hands not later than:

Winter (January) issue: November 15

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Spring (May) issue: March 25

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Early Fall (September) issue: July 15

Late Fall (November) issue: September 25

Photos and graphics are always welcome. If related to an article, photos or graphics should be submitted with the text.

ADVERTISING

For complete particulars on advertising in NENN and/or the NENSA Competition Guide, contact the Administrative Office.

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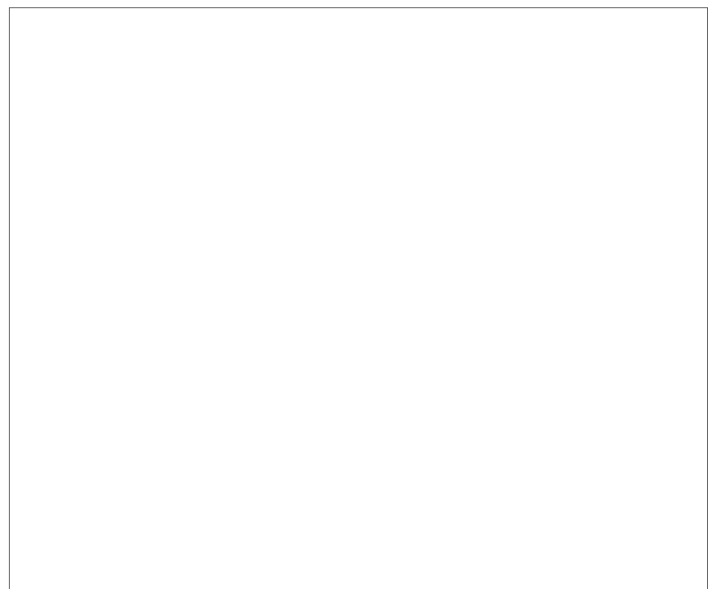
FROM THE EDITORS

Upon my return home from the second annual NENSA coaches' clinic this summer, I tried to explain to a non-skiing friend why I was so excited about training and so enthusiastic about roller skiing in July (even with scraped and bruised knees from a fall during the clinic). She looked puzzled, then finally said, "You skiers just don't ever give up, do you?" Fortunately she's right. I think this is why we cross country skiers so enjoy getting together at training camps and clinics, when there are no normal people around to remind us that we are a little, well, different.

New England skiers didn't let up the pace during the summer of '99. There were numerous regional training camps and clinics, among them an Elite Team testing camp at the beginning of the summer at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, and a national coaches' symposium sponsored by USSA again in Lake Placid and attended by six of our NE coaches. Stratton Mountain once again hosted a Bill Koch league summer camp — this time with 47 skiers attending — ably coached by Sverre Caldwell, Amy Hollingsworth, Zach Caldwell with assists by BKL coaches and parents Bob Haydock, Rob Bradlee, and Lily Caldwell. The kids thrived on 4 days of outdoor activities including soccer, orienteering, hiking, roller skiing, volleyball and swimming. Rumor has it that the coaches all collapsed from exhaustion for several days afterwards. Just one week later Sverre, Zach and Amy rallied and hosted a junior/senior camp, complete with guest appearance by Vladimir Smirnov. Smirre and his former Soviet Union coach Nikolai Anikin, now coach at Gitchi Gummi Sports Center, traveled north afterwards to do two days of coaching at NENSA's coaches' clinic "Gaining More Ground" (see article and photos in this issue). Meanwhile lots of club activities were going on such as the Putney Potluck, with guests Smirre and Anikin, and many other events you can read about in Rob Bradlee's Clubs column in this issue.

We also have a lot to look forward to this fall. Be sure to check the Bill Koch League page in this issue for another selection of favorite fall hikes of Koch League skiers and their families. Check our Calendar page for upcoming events such as roller ski races and the NENSA annual fall meeting. We also offer some excellent articles on training for cross country skiing. Have a great fall!

Anne



Zach Caldwell shows 'em how at coaches' clinic. (Anne Donaghy photo)

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

HIKES AROUND NEW ENGLAND

Can you believe it? Summer is over! You need to get back to doing school work...reading, writing and math. But...with the end of summer, comes fall. The time of year when New England is most colorful! Luckily, it's also a great time for Bill Koch skiers to start to get ready for the winter ski season. Soccer, football, cross country running and gymnastics seem to take front row when it comes to school sports but for families, fall is the most comfortable time to hike New England's trails. The bug count and humidity are low, the air is crisp and the colors are breathtaking. As in years past, NENN has contacted families from our four participating states to recommend hikes near their homes.

Our first report comes from the Savignano family of Auburn, ME. Margaret just finished her time in Bill Koch at the Stowe Festival, while Sean will be a first year J3 skier this season. Dad, Phil, got a little nostalgic when recommending a hike. He had some flashbacks to wonderful family times when the kids were a bit younger and the family did some bike/hike excursions on Mt. Desert Island in Bar Harbor. The plan back then was to get everybody into some trails that were just too far for young ones to reach on foot but the dirt carriage roads provided miles of no-car, safe biking to the trailhead of the day. They would stash their bikes in the brush and then hike to the top. Phil says their days always included a hike to the Jordan Pond Inn for a traditional treat of tea and popovers.

No matter what the age of your family, Mt. Desert Island delivers a smorgasbord of hiking. A chart in the visitor's center will give families and idea of which of the 120 miles of trails they might want to cover. Difficulties are listed, allowing families to tailor the hike to the age and experience of their children. Mt. Desert Island is home to seven hills, the largest being Cadillac Mtn. at 1,530'. It's the highest spot on the Atlantic coast north of Brazil! There is almost always a cooling breeze and in the fall the spectacular views of the Atlantic are enhanced by the red color of the blueberry bushes.

In Goshen, Massachusetts, Greg Richardson and his parents hike in the DAR State Forest 2-3 times per week, all summer long. Their favorite hike takes about 1-1/4 hours. The time it takes will depend on the age and the fitness level of hikers. Starting at the boat launch, follow the trail counterclockwise around the lake. When you reach the first road that intersects the trail, walk down the road past the sign that says camper's beach. The trail goes into the woods on the left about 100 yards later. The lake will now be on your left side. Watch for the blue markers. The trail takes you up to the fire tower (where, at the right time of year, there are wild blueberries) and back to the park proper. There is a gazebo for picnicking and the lake is great for swimming or canoeing and kayaking.

Greg's mom, Mary Ann, says that the trail is on the gentle side and a great place for younger Koch skiers; a perfect place for scavenger hunts. It lends itself well to a run for those in better shape.

To get to the DAR follow Rt. 9 (from Northampton or Pittsfield)

into Goshen to the intersection of Rt. 112 N. Turn (right or left, depending on where you're coming from) and follow for about 3/4 mile. The State Park entrance is on your right.

The New Hampshire hike at Pitcher Mountain is recommended by two families. Annamaria, a J5 skier, of the Smith family from W. Swanzey likes it because not only can she hike there while her older siblings do a more intense workout, she can pick wild blueberries along the way! Ken, Jill, Irene and Dee Henninger of Stoddard hike there often, usually doing a ten mile loop. Ken Henninger says that the short, steep climb to the fire tower is quite a challenge but the panoramic view is more than worth it. From the top, Mt. Monadnock seems just a stone's throw away. In the distance, the hiker can look to Mt. Washington and the White Mountains in the east, with Vermont peaks visible in the west. There's a network of trails, including the Sunapee/Monadnock Trail, which are quite well worn. Whichever hike you choose can be modified by the age range of the group. Snowmobilers are on the trails in the winter, but skiing is an option if you keep on the look-out.

To reach Pitcher Mtn., take Rt. 9E from Keene for 16-18 miles, until you get to the junction of Rt. 123N. Take the left hand turn (you will need to drive past Rt. 123S) and follow about 2-1/2 miles through the town of Stoddard. About another mile out of town, you will pass a Highland Cattle farm (big horns, shaggy fur); the parking area is just up the road on the right. The fire tower is visible from the road. If you want more information, Ken Henninger can be reached at (603) 446-7094.

Whitney Coombs (J3) and her family of Londonderry, VT head off to Stiles Peak in Peru when they want to do a day hike. This is the same hike done quite often at the Stratton Mountain School Bill Koch Summer Camp. It's a nice 1-3/4 mile climb to the top. The trail is well marked and is a challengingly steep hike from the parking lot on Mad Tom Notch. On a recent outing, the Caldwells, Sophie (J5), Austin, Isabel (both J6s) and their parents parked in the same lot but extended their hike to the top of Bromley Mt. which boasts a five state view (VT, NH, MA, ME and NY). Do you think they could really see all the way to Maine? They found the hike a little more gentle than the Stiles Peak hike but the distance was 2-1/2 miles one way.

To get to either hike, take Rt. 11 into Peru, go straight on Landgrove Rd. for 1 mile taking a left onto North Rd.. Follow this for 3/4 mile until you reach Mad Tom Notch. Again, take a left and go up the hill 3 miles. You will pass a parking lot at about the 2 mile mark. Continue past it and go to the top of the hill to the second parking lot. The Appalachian Trail and Long Trail cross each other here. The trails are well marked.

JUNIORS

MAINE JUNIOR SKIERS TRAIN ON SNOW IN OREGON

by Chris Axelson

Chris Axelson is a former member of the USST Nordic Combined Team, a graduate of The Putney School and Middlebury College. He coaches the Greely High School cross country running and nordic ski teams and owns an endurance sports store in Portland, Maine called Peak Performance Sports.

In early July a group of ten talented Maine Junior skiers traveled to Bend, Oregon for ten days of on-snow training. The goal of the camp was to provide an intense athletic experience which would improve skier technique, assess fitness and help establish good training habits. From all reports the camp was a huge success: the skiers had a great time and there's video to prove their snowball technique is vastly improved. What was even more incredible was the three to four feet of clean snow, bright blue skies and warm temperatures.

The skiers were on snow every day at 7:00 AM and skated until 9:00 AM. After a mid-morning snack the diagonal skis were strapped on until 11:00 AM. Imagine that- four hours of on snow training every day for eight days, in July, and in the United States. Plus, thanks are due to Swix, Atomic, Fischer and Salomon for co-sponsoring this outing. They sent out dozens of skis, boots and poles for the athletes to use, giving our skiers a great chance to try the latest and greatest gear before the new season starts.

The primary focus of the week's skiing was technical improvement. Each day's technique session was dissected and captured on video for the evening discussion sessions. We did an interesting thing using video footage from the World Cup. We found a hill that replicated our footage of the big guns at Ramsau and took video of our athletes skiing. In the evening we were able to run two TVs and stop the action of the World Cupper and our skier. Wow... Things become fairly clear when you overlay video of Bjørn Daehlie on film of a 17 year old skier from Maine. This was a terrific learning tool and helped our skiers make rapid technical adjustments.

Bend, Oregon is a hotbed of terrific skiers from Justin Wadsworth of the USST, Beckie Scott of the Canadian National Team and a quiver full of top collegiate skiers. Our group was very fortunate to have arranged with

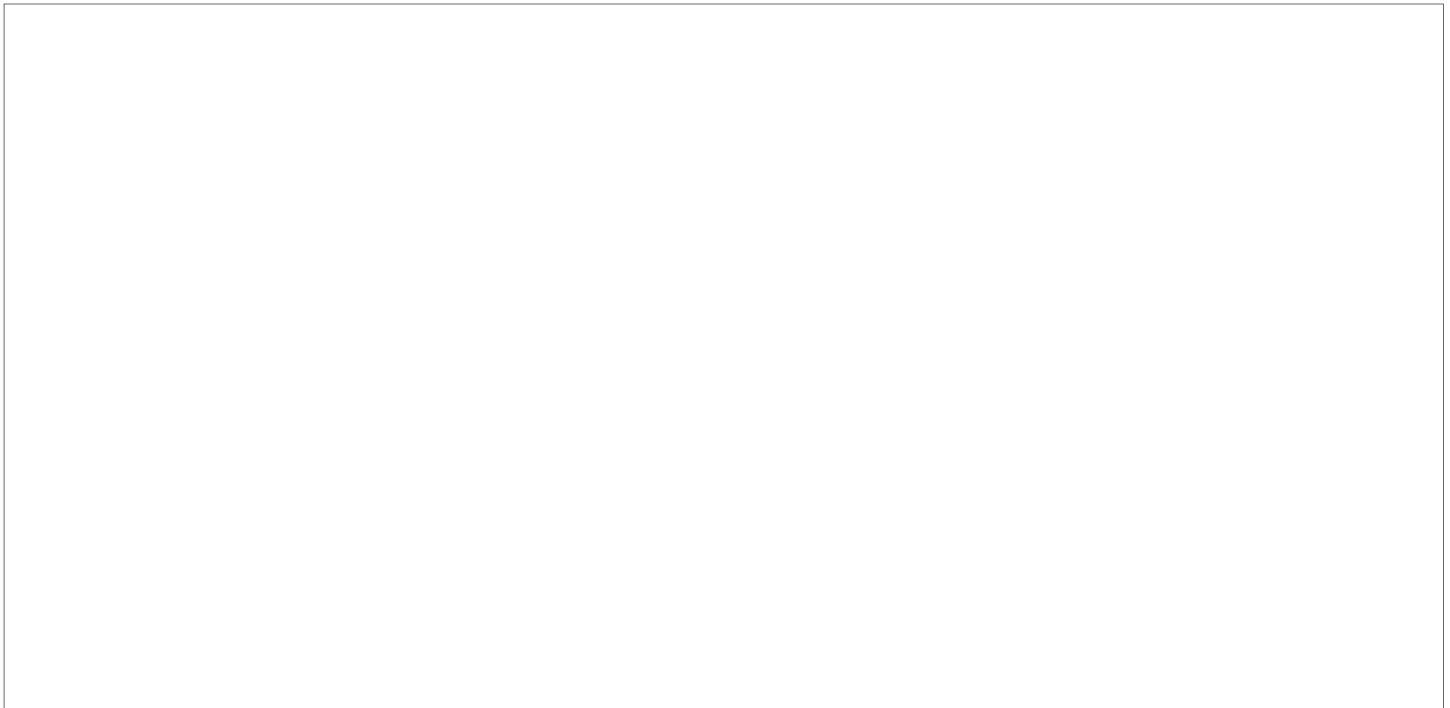
Justin for our skiers to spend a day training with him and Beckie. The two of them were terrific, taking groups of 2-3 out for an hour and showing them how the best in North America ski. It got even better when they invited us out to dinner and each of the athletes got their pictures taken with them. Cool!

One afternoon we ran each skier through the USST Medals Test. The Medals Test is a group of standardized physical fitness challenges that give an indication of an athlete's conditioning. It took about 2-3 hours to run the group of ten through the whole program. When we were done each athlete had some objective results on which to base his or her next round of training. Yeah, a coach can tell his skiers they need to be stronger and faster, but... when an athlete can rip off twice as many sit-ups as the USST skiers and is two minutes back in a 3000 meter run, it's pretty clear what requires focus.

It's important that junior skiers establish good training habits, and what constitutes a good session from a poor one has been the subject of many a sauna party. My best workouts are those that are shared with others, take me some place new, and help me get fit. One of my more vivid memories is from Putney, Vermont in the '70s on our long workout day. We played follow the leader, it was 40 degrees and Jim Galanes ran us straight up a stream bed to the hoots and hollers of ten other athletes. Our skiers in Bend were introduced to some of this craziness. Every afternoon for two to three hours we hiked and ran up mountains, slid down cinder cones, mountain biked on some terrific single track and rafted a river. We ended the week with a 20+ km. tour into the bowl of Broken Top Mountain. And you know that wasn't the end of the shenanigans. One group hung around and hiked up Mt. Bachelor, finding a forty degree slope on which to "carve" turns. I'll let you imagine the rest, but there were grins all around and maybe a conditioning benefit from that hike.

For skiers there isn't anything more fun than training on snow in July in shorts. Everyone wants to do it again. So, next year we'll be staying in Bend a little longer and maybe training with a few more skiers.

Chris Axelson photo



GIRLS' SKIING: THE SLUMP FACTOR

by Nancy Crocker, MD

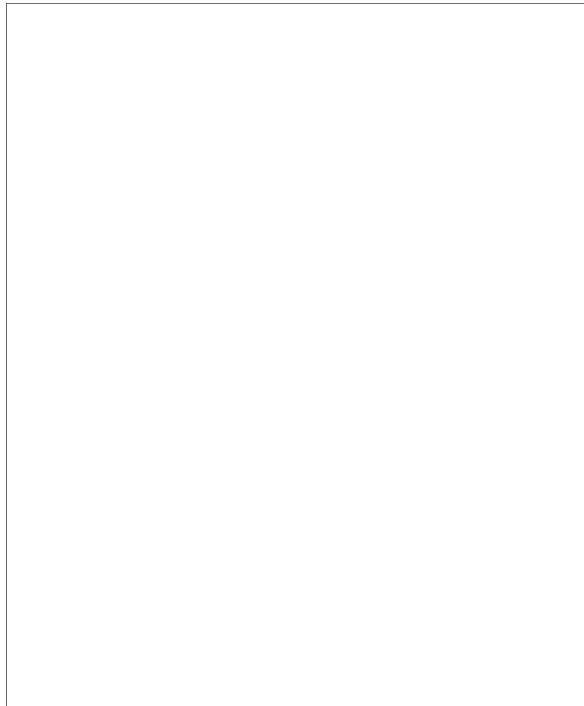
Why am I not getting faster? Why are my times worse? Why are kids beating me when I used to beat them easily? These are familiar questions to parents and coaches of young racers. They are asked most often by 12-15 year old girls. During puberty and thereafter, girls very frequently do slow down in their athletic progress. Coaches, parents, and especially the girls themselves need to understand that this is a natural phenomenon. Most importantly this slump, however disappointing, has no long term consequences for the girl's skiing career.

As girls go through puberty and for a good while thereafter, they put on height and weight. When boys go through puberty, their growth in size tends to be more nearly matched by growth in strength because of the muscle stimulating effects of testosterone. Athletic boys can add muscle even faster than they add weight. Their strength-to-weight ratios improve. The female hormones are not conducive to rapid muscle growth. So strength-to-weight ratios decline in girls. There are considerable individual differences, but the effect will tend to be most pronounced in girls with larger frames. (The phenomenon can also hit some boys when going through extreme growth spurts.)

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point Smirre reflected in his rapidly improving English on the subtle changes in skate technique over the past 13 years: "The picture is the same," he said, "but the colors are still changing."

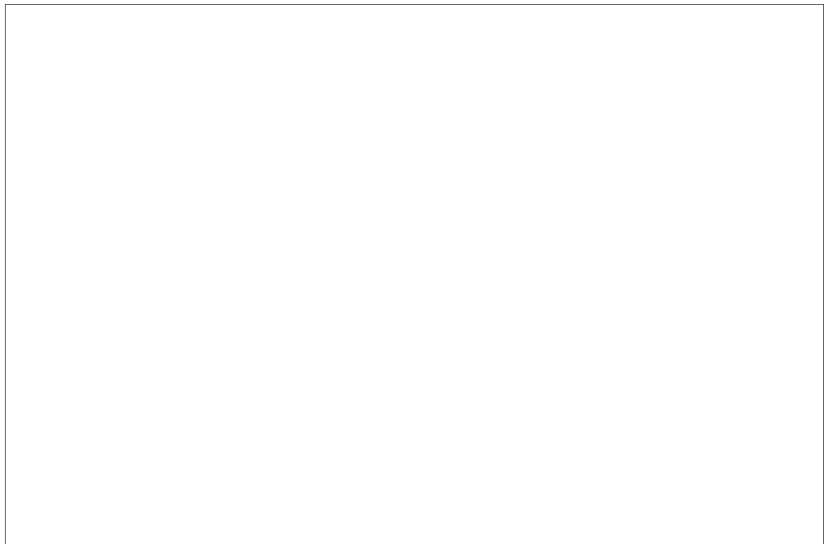
"Gaining More Ground" certainly lived up to its name. Enthusiasm was thicker in the air than deer flies in New Hampshire woods in mid-July. Many participants were still discussing technique points as they got into their cars to drive away. We exchanged email addresses and made plans for summer and fall training sessions, future clinics and other events for skiers of all ages. "This was Vladimir Smirnov (Anne Donaghy photo)



Gymnastics provides a prime example. Note the difference in median age between male and female Olympic gymnasts. For many girls in gymnastics, pubescence spells the end to their careers. Moreover, in a large national study of running mile times of the general population, the time of the fastest girls (95th percentile) slowed from 7:10 to 7:18 between their 13th and 14th years; the similar boys' cohort went from 6:11 to 5:51.

The lower strength to weight ratio for skiers shows up most dramatically on hard climbs, and probably affects skating more than classical. So the athlete going through this transition should expect most challenge on hilly skating courses.

A slowdown in progress, or slump, is natural and not a sign of lack of desire, intensity, focus or training. A girl who hits this stage should not quit, but neither should she triple her workouts. A sensible increase in training each year, with some emphasis on specific strength, should do the trick. Most experts agree that ultimate athletic performance cannot be accurately predicted until the athlete reaches 17 to 22 years of age. Girls who are in the middle of the pack at 15 may be leading it at 20.



Nikolai Anikin (Anne Donaghy photo)

an important step for coaches' education in New England," NENSA's Fred Griffin said. "We built on last year's work, and I believe coaches left here with skills to take home to put to use and share with others. Our presenters helped make it an exceptional learning experience."

Thanks to John Caldwell for his moderating skills, to Len Johnson, to Max Cobb and the US Biathlon Association who co-hosted the weekend, to Fred Griffin and Zach Caldwell for their organizational skills, to all of our presenters, to Jack Eckels for his tireless videotaping, and to Dorcas Wonsavage for taking photos. Special thanks to our guests Vladimir Smirnov, Nikolai Anikin and Miles Minson who all traveled to join us.

CALENDAR

FALL EVENTS

Here are some excellent websites to check for updated information on regional and club events open to all:

NENSA: <http://www.sover.net/~nensa>

New England XC Skiing: <http://www.nexcski.com>

Maine Nordic Ski Club: <http://www.bangornews.infi.net/~cdorion>

Looks like CSU and Maine Nordic are the organized clubs for Fall events. More detailed info for all their events is on the above websites. Also there's a group of northern Vermonters who are gathering on the first Saturday of every month and inviting others of all ages and a wide range of abilities interested in training together (info below). Other clubs, send us events for our late fall/early winter calendar!

NENSA EVENTS

Oct. 17: Fall Board of Directors' meeting, open to the public. Time TBA on the NENSA web site. Location: the office of Perkins, Thompson, Hinckley & Keddy, 8th floor of the Key Bank Building, One Canal Plaza, Portland, ME.

Date TBA: First Annual NENSA Clubs Symposium: time and site TBA on the web site.

Sept. 19: CSU Dryland Training Clinic with Zach Caldwell. Site and time TBA on the web site.

Sept. 26: CSU roller ski tour in Andover, MA.

Sept. 26: Women's training day. Putney, VT. Bring roller skis, running shoes, maybe even a swimsuit. Contact Mary Heller Osgood (msho@sover.net or 802-387-4543).

Oct. 2, 9 AM: Rollerski training session, Jericho, VT. Hosts: Murray, Jane and Jeff Banks - 802-899-5415. Meet at the biathlon range parking lot within the National Guard Ethan Allen Training Facility in Jericho. (Detailed directions to follow a week or two in advance.) Training will be roller skiing (running can be an alternative) for 2-3 hours on the paved training loops at the facility. Bring a picnic lunch.

Oct. 3: Wilton roller ski race, Wilton NH. 18K mostly uphill! Contact Bob Hamel at (978)368-4128.

Oct. 9: Bogburn Trail Work Day. What fun! Contact rhaydock@ultranet.com

Oct. 10: Bogburn BKL Day Camp. As above.

Oct. 16: 2nd annual Long Falls Dam Road roller ski marathon (in Maine). Karl Johnson has been grooming the surface to a perfect, firm, fast black powder. Course is flat for first 14 mi. then features a 3 mi. climb, then a winding flat section following an esker to Flagstaff Lake. For more info. contact Karl Johnson (207)235-3121.

Oct. 24: Wompatuck roller ski race, Wompatuck State Park, Hingham MA. Contact Rob Simms at rsimms@med-medi.bu.edu.

Oct. 31: Halloween roller ski tour. Concord MA. Contact Bob Haydock.

Nov. 6: at 9 AM. Rollerski training session. (Tentative) Host: Peter Harris (802) 766-8002. Meet at the Troy General Store in Troy, Vermont (Jay Peak area). Detailed directions to follow a week or two in advance. Training will be roller skiing for 2-3 hours on a quiet road with great pavement. Bring a picnic lunch.

From the Archives

Nat Goodhue from Stowe, VT (formerly from Anchorage, AK) won the last issue's contest by guessing that the photo of John Morton was taken at the North American Championships on the Biathlon trail outside of Anchorage in 1974. Free tickets to the 2044 first Olympic downhill roller ski race, Nat! Charlie Kellogg and Nat both correctly identified Martha Rockwell in the second photo, but not the location. It was in Switzerland — can anyone else get more specific than that?

22-YEAR-OLD RACE RESULTS

Results from the Putney Relays, Jan. 16, 1977 - 3x5 K women's field (sorry men, this is all I could find):

1. Middlebury Bionic Women (L. Carey, R. Baxter, M. Cain)
2. Putney Hot Shots (T. Hosmer, K. Mumford, M. Heller)
3. Quebec (P. McDougall, C. Giguere, J. Ross)
4. Dartmouth Outing Club #1 (W. Thurber, H. Meyer, A. Thomas)
5. Middlebury Old Maids (P. Richardson, Kellam, J. Caldwell)
6. Middlebury Maidens (Putnam, Hutchinson, Sewell)
7. Dartmouth Outing Club #2 (K. Sonnerup, C. Coggeshall, C. Sprague)
8. Lyndon Ladies (T. Valentine, B. Paxson, J. Musolf)
9. Dartmouth Outing Club #3 (B. Stroock, J. Kschinka, H. Forbes)
10. Putney #1 (B. Ehrenfeld, K. Thurber, C. Brelsford)

There were 13 other teams (including CSU, Holderness, Adirondack Ski Club, Radcliffe) for a total field of 23... How many of these women are still racing??

Just think, Mary and Trina were racing together for Putney even back then!

Nov. 7: CSU roller ski race, N. Andover MA. 9:30 AM start. Contact Jamie Doucette at james.doucette@state.ma.us.

Nov. 18-30: On-snow training camp in Silver Star, B.C. Coach Will Sweetser. Price is \$1,650 with a minimum of 5 athletes, \$600 deposit due Sept. 6. Option of racing the western Continental Cup Openers. For more info. phone Will at Carrabassett Valley Academy 207-237-2250.

NENSA

TRAINING

STRENGTH TRAINING

By Zach Caldwell, NENSA Program Director

This is the second part of the article that Zach started in our summer issue. If you don't have a copy of the first part and would like one, contact the editors (info on pg. 2)

THE PLAN

Building speed is a long-term process, undertaken over years. The different components of speed are addressed most appropriately at different times during the development of a young athlete. A complete plan for the development of speed is material for a book, not a (relatively) short article. The following outline of periods should be viewed with its relative significance in mind. It's a small piece of a large picture. Given that, this is the planning outline that I'll be putting into practice, working with, and refining over the next couple of seasons. Don't say I didn't warn you!

Period One: Basic Training Education (Early-Mid Spring)

All developing athletes have weaknesses in their training skills. These cannot all be addressed at once, but in order for long term training to be effective they must be addressed over time. This period is designed to provide a focus on appropriate training skill development. For some of the younger developing athletes this means working on the ability to plan a week's worth of training activities (all athletes should be responsible for the day-to-day planning of their training). This will introduce the athlete to the skills associated with balancing stress and recovery in all aspects of life. Older athletes who have already become proficient at planning day to day training may work on consistent execution, and adherence to a schedule, or the confidence to make good adjustments to the schedule. The role of any coach is to develop self-coaching athletes. This period represents an opportunity to focus on that end of development.

Focus: The development of good training skills and habits.

Specific Recommendations: Traditional "basic endurance" training with relatively low volume, depending on school and work schedules. Running, bicycling, hiking, and other leg-oriented work should be mixed with upper body work such as double poling. Specificity is not of primary importance here, and it is a very good time to utilize other whole-body activities such as rowing or swimming. Some particularly underdeveloped athletes may benefit from a six to eight week period of weight training here in order to improve recruitment efficiency and synchronization in order to build the capacity for higher sustainable loads in future strength training.

Period Two: Foundation Strength & Technique (Late Spring through Mid-Summer)

The focus here is on the development of specific strength applied with a technically correct foundation in position, balance, and basic motion. Emphasis in easy training is on technique and range of motion. Most training sessions emphasize foundation technique, but not tempo or power. Lots of technical feedback and supervision is appropriate for developing athletes. This is where effective technique is built.

Focus: The integration of specific technical foundation work into the majority of training sessions.

Specific Recommendations: A shift toward specificity is appropriate here. This period should be introduced with a strong emphasis on basic technical progressions, and the establishment of good body position and alignment. The necessary technique-specific sessions

needed to accomplish this can be built into the plan for the entire year; the focus of these sessions can be shifted as the focus of the periods is shifted. I recommend a minimum of one of these sessions a week. In Putney we call them "Uli Sessions" after Uli Wenger, a Swiss coach who visited several years ago and showed us a bunch of the specific exercises that we've adapted over time to suit our needs. These Uli sessions can be combined in this period with general ski-strength sessions where ski walking against surgical-tubing resistance and roller-board training provides the strength component. General ski-strength may be considered ski-specific, and it is, but in this context it's not conducted at tempo, and doesn't truly qualify as specific strength.

Day to day training should feature a technical emphasis during this period as well. Roller ski sessions should emphasize body position, alignment, and range of motion. Specific workout recommendations include double pole sessions of 1-2 hours and more over varying (hilly) terrain. This should not be a high intensity training session — emphasis should be on full use of the musculature at relatively low tempo, and oxidative levels of exertion. Lactate spot-checking is useful here if it's available. Also, no-pole skate sessions emphasizing the same things are useful. Ski-walking can be incorporated into all running sessions, and poles carried along provide some useful arm work. Again, the emphasis is on good technique and full range of motion. Tempo can be slow to keep intensity under control (but don't worry if the old HR climbs a bit — it won't kill you).

Every training session, aside from active recovery sessions, should have an explicitly stated focal point during this period. For most athletes this is the most critical period for feedback and supervision by a coach.

Period Three: Build Speed (Late Summer)

The point here is to use anaerobic intensity to increase training speed across the board. This relatively short (four to five week) period provides an opportunity for the athlete to bring their specific training up to speed. This does not mean that race pace is appropriate for every workout. It means that several times during each week the athlete will go out and roller ski, or double pole, or ski walk, using the same focus on technique and range of motion that was introduced in the previous period, but with no restrictions on tempo. This will result in some sustained threshold-level training. The point behind this is not so much physiological as phenomenological. The athlete needs to begin to feel the speed that can result from good foundation technique, so all restrictions must be removed. A drop in hours during this period will help to keep recovery possible, and will optimize the success of the period.

Focus: The realization of improved ski-speed from a long period of work on foundation strength & technique.

Specific Recommendations: Training sessions should remain similar in nature. Scheduled intervals may be used, but should not be necessary; the intensity used in these sessions should be quite sustainable. In general, little changes during this period, aside from the focus of the training. Additionally, some neuromuscular speed work can be introduced during this period. Short acceleration against low resistance are appropriate just about any time of year, but begin to be important here as we prepare to turn foundation strength and technique into applied power.

Period Four: Train Speed (Early-Mid Fall)

Back off on intensity, build hours back up, but keep emphasis on training pace. Carry speed developed in the previous training period

over into focus on efficiently covering ground fast. Some technical refinement may be appropriate on roller skis.

Focus: The economic development of speed in day to day training.

Specific Recommendations: A return to lower intensity training accompanies a shift in focus toward economy. If the foundation has been well constructed, speed will be easy to come by, and economy can be addressed with a bit of attention to technical refinement, and a focus on covering ground in easy training. Training sessions should be quite specific in nature, with a great deal of attention paid to variability in technique reflecting the terrain. A continuation of the neuromuscular speed work introduced in the previous period is appropriate here, and can be addressed in combination with the focus described above. Technically challenging leg-speeds are useful, and sending athletes in pairs or trains can give them the opportunity to observe and learn from others.

Period Five: Build Power (Mid-Late Fall)

In this period we work to combine the foundation strength that has been built over the year to date with the focus on speed that we've had in the more recent periods. It can be helpful early in this period to refocus attention on the dryland foundation in order to ensure that power is applied correctly to the foundation motions. Later in the period power can be applied and trained on roller skis without such concern for isolation.

Focus: The development of applied power through the combination of foundation strength and technique with speed.

Specific Recommendations: Short repetitions of the ski imitation drills at high power output, and the development of some additional power-specific dryland drills can be very effective. The introduction of spenst-type or plyometric training is also appropriate here. Variability of resistance in dryland drills will maintain focus and coordination, and will emphasize both neuromuscular speed and recruitment efficiency. Some specifically designed short intervals (double pole repeats and no-pole skating for my kids) on roller skis may result in high lactate concentrations, but full recovery can be allowed. Short walking and bounding intervals are especially good. We'll continue to use resistance bands for much of this. In day to day endurance training short accelerations over the tops of hills are effective. Last season we tried a points race during a double-pole workout where points were awarded for sprints to landmarks such as town-lines or paved intersections (double points if you win the sprint finishing with ten single-poles!).

Period Six: Pre-Competition (Late Fall-Early Winter)

A continued emphasis on dryland power development must be combined in this period with early snow considerations and preseason preparation. Success in the racing season will depend largely on the level of focus that is brought to this training period. Especially for people stuck in New England, flexibility is critical during this time, as a firm expectation of snow time can lead to disappointment.

Focus: The development of optimal applied power combined with reacclimation to snow skiing and early season fitness demands. The true focus in this period must be on good planning and appropriate focus in each and every training session.

Specific Recommendations: Continued power development is best addressed with continued dry-land training along the lines outlined in the previous period, with periodic lengthening into intensity/interval

sessions. Bounding repeats and long bounding intervals are a favorite here, as are rollerski pace sessions. Early on-snow time should be focused on easy technical reacclimation, trending toward the fast/easy pace developed in periods 3 and 4. There will be some early racing during this period which should be trained-through for most athletes.

Competition Period

The focus here is, as always, on racing, but training must be maintained. Specifically, it is important to continue a strength-maintenance program through most of the competition period. The specific program will depend in part on the needs of the individual, but can certainly involve some of the general ski-strength exercises used earlier and throughout the year.

Technical refinement is always appropriate during this period, and can provide a good focus for easy days of ski training, but expectations for major improvement should be limited and realistic.

SUMMARY

In practice the plan that I've outlined doesn't look too different from what people have been doing for years. None of the specific training recommendations are anything new, and in fact, much of this may appear somewhat out of date. In my mind, the significance of this plan is in its focus on the speed-related goals of each training period, and how those goals should drive the planning process, and the execution of every training session.

As I mentioned before outlining the plan, a complete explanation of, and plan for, the long-term development of skiing speed is far beyond the scope of this article. My hope is that this piece will encourage skiers and coaches to give greater consideration to the development of speed in their planning, and that an ongoing discussion might be generated exploring the use of periodization in training, and how the concept can best be applied.

NENSA VIDEOS AVAILABLE

Anyone who wants a video of the activities of the NENSA Clinic, July 9-11, 1999 at Jericho, contact Jack Eckels by e-mail at jeckels@acsu.k12.vt.us OR by US Mail at 101 Seminary St. Ext., Middlebury, VT, 05753-1257 OR by phone at (802) 388-6502.

People should request Tape #1 (CL Dryland, CL rollerski, FS Dryland, FS Rollerski with Vladimir Smirnoff & Nikolai Anikin) or Tape #2 (Stretching w/ Fred G., Nutrition, Psychological, Upper Body Power w/Dr. Rundell), or both. The tapes are \$15.00 each, which includes shipping.

CLUB NOTES

SUMMER CLUB ACTIVITIES

Send Rob Bradlee your club news at robb@instructionset.com

NENSA clubs are spending the summer scrambling for a competitive edge. Some are traveling across the water, some are importing old-world superstars, and some are building their own empire here. The Bedford (NH) club scrounged a \$9,000 bridge-building grant which will expand their nascent 4K trail system to 20K this winter. Over in Vermont, Mountain Top Nordic is proving their hills are the steepest with a surveying project to create a course profile to put on their new website. It's good to see NENSA clubs working to improve New England race facilities.

Putney, meanwhile, is going the import route. Apparently not satisfied with their own crop of Olympians (I mean, geez, TC is a lawyer now), they brought in superstar Vladimir Smirnov for a swinging soiree at the Caldwell Sauna Pond. The home-brew was flowing and soon John Caldwell shocked the ski community by revealing Putney's heretofore secret bid for the 2006 Olympics. Smirre is on the selection committee and Putney immediately started plying him with bribes...er, I mean gifts. Sverre Caldwell of Stratton Mountain School demonstrated results of their secret program to develop year-round snow making. Sverre presented Smirre with a dripping bag of "Eastern Powder," which looked very much like a bag of ice-cubes from 7-11. PSC skipped over the charade of "scholarships" for Smirre's kids and cut to the chase with completed diplomas from the Putney School. I suppose that means they can go straight to Dartmouth without taking the SAT like the rest of the Putney crew.

CSU spies were soon sending out reports of the party over their club email list, and plans are underway to get a full Harvard professorship for Bjørn Daehlie. Darn, it's tough keeping up with the Caldwells. CSU scrambled to catch up at the "Gaining More Ground" coaches' clinic, but one skier face-planted in the rollerski drill right in front of Smirre while another dozed off during Nikolai's evening talk. The fresh air must have been too much for them.

The Putney crew may have imported the Euro-talent, but meanwhile the Gunstock Nordic skiers flew to Finland this summer to ski underground. Check out this web page: <http://www.skitunnelvuokatti.fi/eindex.html>. It's for the Vuokatti Ski Tunnel in Finland and includes a tunnel cam updated every few seconds. Are we far behind or what?

Skiers from the Maine Nordic Club perhaps had the best idea by doing their spring training in northern Italy to learn more about the Italian lifestyle that has created such champions as Stephania and Silvio. It involves lots of red wine and loud but in-tune singing. (Previously the Mainiacs preferred micro-brew and loud off-key singing). Refreshed from their trip, the club hosted the "Maine Women are on the Move" event.

Alice "I don't cook" Goodwin and Saranne Taylor hosted a weekend training camp on the shores of Lake Pennaseewassee (I'm not making up that name). Activities included a power

sprint golf tournament, an all-day hike, and the grand finale : a women's only triathlon that combined an open water swim with a uphill trail run, orienteering skills, and a long technical mountain bike ride over a mountain. The winner won a lovely purple velvet crown with sequins; the loser won a compass.

While the gals were competing to wear a silly hat, star Masters skier Peter Hall was developing his career as a roller ski model. He's got to be better than Poulie in all those Bean catalogs.

Be sure to tune in to Fox's "Scariest Police Chases" to see the NH SWAT team chase down Upper Valley Nordic's weekly rollerski group. Took them several kilometers to rein in Chris "Take no Prisoners" Nice. Seems those crazy UVNC skiers had blocked an intersection with their cars. Who says NH is a police state?

[Ed. Note: Chris Nice was on his bike somewhere else while we were dealing with the police. Guess we can't always trust Rob to print only the facts.]



CLUB PROFILE

A LOOK AT THE PUTNEY SKI CLUB

Driving through Vermont after the Gold Cup races in Lake Placid in early January of 1998, Jim Galanes stopped off in Putney just to see what was up. He was surprised to find a ski race going on. The Vermont fields all along I-91 had been bare after another January rain. In fact there wasn't any snow in Putney either, but that hadn't stopped the Putney Ski Club from holding their annual Putney Relays. Close to two hundred skiers of all ages were racing laps of a 1.5 kilometer loop of snow and frozen grass. No other club in New England could have hosted an Eastern Cup race that weekend, but Putney had pulled it off.

Putney skiers know how to work. Just an inch of snow on those fields? No problem. After realizing that the manure spreader wasn't going to spread snow very well, club members shoveled snow into a tractor with a bucket loader and made hundreds of trips to dump it into a white trail ready to be groomed by the new Pisten Bully. In fact the Putney Ski Club has such a work ethic that the rest of us are prepared to believe almost any of the stories of physical heroics that we hear about them. And they love to spread those stories, too. One anonymous but reliable source tells the story of John Caldwell during his many years as the Putney School cross country ski coach and soccer coach, piling his soccer players (all skiers) into a big truck with their bikes. A few miles from Deerfield Academy the players unloaded and biked to the field, where JC awaited them with their soccer cleats. Putney played a full game of soccer (which they won), then changed shoes and hopped on their bikes and rode away, much to the amazement of the Deerfield team. Of course JC met them with the truck a few miles from Deerfield, with no one the wiser.

If you're looking for the source of the legendary Putney humor, you need look no farther than John Caldwell, "father of cross country skiing in the US," as his friend the former Soviet coach Nikolai Anikin says. This is not a title that John Caldwell would use himself. He's happier with calling himself "the Dumpmeister," in reference to his role as chairman of the Windham County dump committee. JC, as many New England skiers affectionately call him, loves jokes. Many skiers from all parts of the country grew up hearing Caldwell waxing stories such as how he carefully melted and removed the blue wax from a tin and replaced it with a red wax, just to fool the competitors who always looked over to see what Caldwell was waxing with that day (the truth is he likes to help any skiers wax, even non-Putney skiers). JC's humor was in peak form at last July's potluck dinner that the Putney Ski Club hosted for guests Nikolai Anikin and Olympic medalist and world champion Vladimir Smirnov. Knowing that Smirre had just become a member of the IOC, JC and other Putney members came up with a series of "bribes" for Smirre, declaring that Putney was on its way to a bid for an upcoming Winter Olympics. JC joked that while IOC members and their families received scholarships in Utah, Putney would do them one better — and he presented Smirre with two Putney School "diplomas" for his little girls.

This is a ski club with a laid-back attitude about most everything — "Take that \$5 you save by being a club member when you join NENSA and send it to me for your dues for the coming year. And family dues are still \$10. Helluva deal!" (Caldwell in a club newsletter) — most everything except competition. Just ask their archrival club the Cambridge Sports Union, whom Putney beat out for the NENSA '99 Club Series trophy (a crystal bowl commissioned by a Putney artist). Putney decided that they would beat CSU, "the Boston Banana Belt club" as Caldwell calls them, at their own game. JC and other Putney club members went out and recruited people to race for Putney in the club race series: spouses, children, parents, distant relatives, and even skiers from other clubs. CSU suddenly realized that they could no longer dominate by sheer numbers. The Putney Ski Club had become a force to reckon with.

Actually the Putney Ski Club has always been a force to reckon with. You can't count on the fingers of two hands the number of Olympic athletes who have lived and trained and been coached in Putney. After racing in the 1952 Olympics and coaching countless Putney School ski and soccer teams, John Caldwell went on to coach national and Olympic ski teams, then continued coaching at the club level long after that. Consider Olympians Martha Rockwell, Bob Gray, Bill Koch, Jim Galanes, Everett and Stan Dunklee, Tim Caldwell, Willie Carrow, Trina Hosmer, Charlie Kellogg, Joe McNulty. Take Trina Hosmer: she had been an international running competitor but had never been on cross country skis until the day of the 1966 Putney 50K race, when she went as the designated driver for a carload of male UVM skiers. While she waited for the race to end, she started skiing, helped by very friendly Putney skiers, and she was concentrating so hard and having so much fun that she forgot to give the UVM guys their race feeds (it must have been a long trip home!). "My introduction to skiing was so positive," she says, "due to the good tracks and friendly encouraging skiers, that I was hooked." And as Trina points out, it's more of a lifestyle than a sport. "The Putney Ski Club offers the guidance, encouragement and social aspect that are so important in the long run."

Many dozens of skiers have been nurtured in the Putney Ski Club and they are still racing, coaching, or building clubs and ski programs for other skiers in the US. It's no wonder that Jim Galanes, now living in Alaska and running a US Ski Team and regional training center, stopped by Putney just to see what was going on. A lot was going on, as usual.

NENSA Clothing

Only one order this year! NENSA is offering its members the same distinctive ski clothing from VO Max at last year's prices. Orders must be received by October 26, so get your order form by sending a SAS envelope to Jane Banks, P.O. Box 246, Underhill Center, VT 05490. Group or Club name printing is available on most items; ask for details.

NENSA Briefs

ALPINA JOINS SPONSOR LIST

Alpina will support cross-country skiing in New England as an associate sponsor for the Volvo Eastern High School Championships, the Volvo New England Junior-2 Carnival, and the Volvo Bill Koch Festival. "We are looking forward to developing our partnership with Alpina over the upcoming year," said Fred Griffin, NENSA's Executive Director. "Alpina will be a strong presence at these key events, providing prizes and race support. We wholeheartedly welcome them."

* * * * *

NENSA is still looking for a digital camera and a laptop computer.

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NENSA still seeks a Media Coordinator. Part-time position includes managing pre-race publicity, race photography, and posting race results. Inquire at the administrative Office.



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