

SUPPORTING SENIOR ELITE SKI RACERS

by Patrick Cote, NENSA Program Director

Graduation from college or the decision to put off college to work on a ski career can be one of the most important and difficult times for a cross country ski racer in the United States. One must ask, "Should I continue my ski racing career?" From a physical perspective it is obvious that a twenty to twenty-three year old cross country skier is still a few years away from their prime in the sport. The cultural and emotional perspectives, however, are what make the athlete's decision a true challenge.

The background: Most athletes find themselves on a supportive team environment that they have been a part of, in most cases, for many years. They probably played many team sports and skied in the Bill Koch League when they were very young, skied for a high school and/or club after that, then went on to be part of a their college team. These teams, most likely, played an important role in the athlete's love of the sport. These teams provided people with whom to share victories, defeats, and the long training hours. They often provided a social group for the athlete even when far away from the ski trails. In this group, one's role as a successful athlete was a valued one, and one's dedication to the sport was seldom questioned.

Now, the athlete faces removal from this supportive group. The new social group of the athlete tends to reflect cultural values that one finds in American society as a whole. The athlete now faces a conflict between American cultural expectations and the expectations of being an elite Nordic skier. At the same time, the athlete loses a great deal of financial support. All of these things combine to create a lack of stability that can be disturbing for anyone, and disastrous to an athlete's training and development. Combine this with very little positive feedback from society, including family and friends, who might say things like, "Maybe it's time to get a real job," and it becomes easy to see why very few skiers choose to continue their careers after college.

I think that one would be hard-pressed to find a senior elite level skier who does not question, at times, their decision to keep going with the sport. Cory Smith, a New England skier

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who has been training and racing out of Park City for the four years since he graduated from college has a website whose title describes his place in the world as, "Somewhere Between Obscurity and Oblivion." He and others have found workable living situations and ways to make ends meet, but still feel the pressure of trying to survive in an obscure sport.

So, what can we do? I think that all of us need to think about how we can support the Elite level senior athletes in New England. The Eastern Residency Center at Stratton Mountain School is the only formal support for athletes in the above situation and I know that the athletes skiing out of that center could use even more complete support. Also, we should think carefully about the conversations we have with all skiers. Not only those who have already found national team success like Tessa Benoit and David Chamberlain, but also those who are working toward that same goal like Liz Hollenbach and Jesse Gallagher, should be held up as heroes and role models for our younger athletes. They are leading the way as living examples of "the next step" on the development ladder and should be honored as such.

Author's note: Please be in touch with me at pat@nensa.net to comment on the written thoughts above or if you have ideas for providing support for elite level athletes.

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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:
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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

Fred Griffin's cover article "Looking Both Ways" for our Spring issue considered the highlights of this past ski season and looked ahead to the explosion of fun activities before us this summer. This entire Summer issue of NENN could be titled that, really, as we feature interviews with Zach Caldwell as he leaves the position of NENSA Program Director after nearly six years, and with Pat Cote as he takes the baton (or is it a torch?) from Zach.

Those of us who were at that historic April 1995 meeting of the NE Cross Country Committee remember the excitement of embarking on a completely new path — the creation of the New England Nordic Ski Association. That spring and summer we weren't more than a few committees and this newsletter (which came out in October and was mostly the racing schedule for the coming ski season). By late November we were a non-profit corporation with a bank account, a Board of Directors and a Manager, Zach Caldwell, who manned the "office" from the Blueberry Hill Ski Touring Center that winter. We hope you enjoy our interview with Zach in this issue as he looks back over nearly six years of managing and directing NENSA programs, and we hope you join us in sending him our many thanks for the tremendous amount of work he did. He's still going to be around, by the way! And just as busy as ever, as our Eastern Regional Development Coordinator for the U.S. Ski Team and as he coaches and manages the Eastern Residency Center at Stratton Mountain.

Looking ahead is definitely exciting. Pat Cote, who grew up in Maine and came through the NE cross country skiing development pipeline as a racer, knows where we've been and brings a vision and commitment to where New England skiing is heading. If you haven't yet met him, we hope you enjoy meeting him as you read his article on the cover of this issue, and in our interview with him. In the rest of this issue you will see that there are plenty of opportunities this summer and early fall at NENSA-sponsored activities to talk with Pat.

Happy Summer everyone!

Anne Donaghy
Mary Hamel
Co-editors

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

INTERVIEW: ALISON CROCKER

Alison Crocker has been cross country skiing since she was in first grade. With her family (Dad, Larry; Mom, Nancy; brother, Mark and sister Stephanie), she traveled from her home in Poughkeepsie, New York on Wednesdays and Saturdays for skiing with the Berkshire Trails Bill Koch club. In eighth grade, she went to Stratton Mountain School for the winter term. The following year, she was accepted to St. Paul's School in Concord, NH where she just finished her junior year. Ali began competing for the NENSA junior Olympic team as a J2. She has represented NENSA at junior nationals for the last three years. She was national classic champion in 1999. Her St. Paul's crew team finished second in the country last season. NENN caught her on the night before she departed for London to row in the Women's Henley Regatta on the Thames.

What brought you to cross country skiing?

I started out downhill skiing and then started doing some cross country skiing. I like both sports but I broke my leg in 4th grade downhill skiing at Sugarbush and that sort of decided the matter. Then I started only doing cross country skiing.

I know that you've found you can injure yourself cross country skiing too!

Yes, I've found that out over the last couple of seasons. (Ed. note: Ali fell in February 2000 while skiing a warm down after a JOQ. She separated her shoulder. She reinjured her shoulder this past season and is planning to have surgery to correct the problem during the summer.)

The heart of the Bill Koch League is family. How has your family influenced your long commitment to the sport?

I think it's been very important the whole family's been involved in cross country skiing; my parents along with my brother and sister. I don't think we would've traveled two hours if it had just been me.

A big part of my parents' support comes in driving me everywhere. They also have the right mix of encouraging without pressure. They're always there psyching me up... giving me a little Gatorade or something.

Can you remember back to when you started to train for racing?

I remember the WEMA practices where we were skiing around and then playing games and then skiing around some more. I guess that was training without thinking it was training. I think in the later J4 year I started taking longer skis and being more focused on training to go faster in a race; working hard on uphill... Out of skiing, training took the form of going for a jog on my own or biking back from soccer practice. And then later I started to roller ski. There were some Bill Koch Festivals where I would be training on roller skis going into the race because there was no snow where I lived in New York.

What did you do during the summer when you were Bill Koch age?

My family did a lot of road racing (running) on the weekends and some kids' triathlons. In the spring and fall, I played soccer. I played soccer through 8th grade.

Do you feel differently about your brother's and sister's involvement in the sport?

I think neither my sister or my brother got to experience downhill skiing as much as I did. When I stopped downhill skiing, so did my whole family. There may be some disadvantage for them on the downhills but I think they can get just as good learning to ski downhill just on cross country skis. In some ways, it's been better for them since I've been gone. Mark and Stephie play lacrosse which I never did.

When you look to the future, what role do you see skiing playing as you go on to college and beyond?

It's definitely the sport I'm looking for in college. I'm looking for the college with the best mix of academics and skiing. Some colleges are looking for me to row but I want to make cross country skiing my main commitment. It would be hard to do both sports on a high level, although I may try my freshman year. I'd love to keep rowing as a cross training sport.

Is there one idea or philosophy that you would like to pass on to kids in the Bill Koch League?

The most important thing is to have fun. That's the overriding philosophy: if it's not fun then there's no point in doing it.

MASTERS

ZAK WINNERS 2001

Contact: Bob Haydock <rhaydock@ultranet.com>

For the fourth year in a row John Sackett won the men's Zak Cup, while Dorcas Wonsavage repeated her last year's victory in the women's. Notable performances include Trina Hosmer's fourth place finish overall and first place finish in the 55-59 age group with a perfect 175 points. Other skiers with a perfect age group score include John Sackett, Bob Gray, David Boucher, and Owen Haskell. For at least the fourth time, the overall winner (Dorcas Wonsavage) was beaten in her age group (by Amy Gunn). The number of women racing in the Zak Cup nearly doubled over last year, while the number of men increased by 32%. Having the AXCS National Masters in the East probably contributed to the increase. Winners should receive their VOMax prizes sometime this summer.

Women Zak Cup Overall

Place	Points	Last Name	First Name	Age	City	ST	Races
1	125	Wonsavage	Dorcas	35	Wilton	ME	6
2	123	Gunn	Amy	38	Henniker	NH	9
3	113	Carlson	Cheryl	42	Lebanon	NH	11
4	109	Hosmer	Trina	55	Pelham	MA	7
5	100	Cartwright	Natalie	30	Colchester	VT	4

Number of Racers: 2001-41; 2000-22

Women Zak Cup Age Group Winners

AgeGp.	Points	Last Name	First Name	Age	City	ST	Races
30-34	130	Brickley	Annette	34	Orono	ME	6
35-39	165	Gunn	Amy	38	Henniker	NH	9
40-44	170	Carlson	Cheryl	42	Lebanon	NH	11
45-49	160	Newton	Jody	48	Wayland	MA	9
50-54	100	Banks	Jane	51	Underhill Ctr.	VT	4
55-59	175	Hosmer	Trina	55	Pelham	MA	7
60-64	75	Berman	Sara Mae	64	Cambridge	MA	3
65-69	70	Hall	Charlotte	67	Crafts. Comm.	VT	3

In 2001 14 competed in 40-44 Age Group, 10 competed in 45-49 Age Group, 6 competed in 30-34 Age Group, smaller numbers in other groups.

Men Zak Cup Overall

Place	Points	Last Name	First Name	Age	City	ST	Races
1	170	Sackett	John	41	Lyndonville	VT	10
2	125	Bradlee	Robert	43	Reading	MA	9
3	100	Holland	Joe	38	Putney	VT	8
4	93	Gunn	Charlie	46	Henniker	NH	9
5	85	Dreher	Michael	35	Durham	NH	6

Number of Racers: 2001-151; 2000-114

Men Zak Cup Age Group Winners

AgeGp.	Points	Last Name	First Name	Age	City	ST	Races
30-34	162	Brickley	Peter	33	Orono	ME	7
35-39	165	Holland	Joe	38	Putney	VT	8
40-44	175	Sackett	John	41	Lyndonville	VT	10
45-49	165	Gunn	Charlie	46	Henniker	NH	9
50-54	170	Newbury	Ronald	50	Auburn	ME	7
55-59	170	Siren	Raul	55	Athens	ME	9
60-64	175	Gray	Bob	61	Newbury	VT	10
65-69	175	Boucher	David	65	Essex Jct	VT	10
70-74	175	Haskell	Owen	72	New Gloucester	ME	7

In 2001 34 competed in 40-44 Age Group, 30 competed in Age Group 45-49, 26 competed in Age Group 50-54, 16 in Age Group 30-34, smaller numbers in other groups.

BOOK REVIEW

Long Distance: A Year of Living Strenuously by Bill McKibben

Reviewed by J. T. Horn, Upper Valley Nordic Club

Bill McKibben is best known as an environmental writer. Author of *The End of Nature*, he is credited with writing the first book about global climate change for the mainstream press. His latest book, *Long Distance: A Year of Living Strenuously*, has the author embarking on a more personal journey to become a competitive athlete. McKibben, a self-professed gangly weakling as a kid, was never involved in serious competitive athletics. At the age of 38 he decides to see if he can reshape his body and his mind into that of a competitive cross country skier. He gives himself a year to focus on this goal and see how good he can become in competitive skiing. He gets a coach, a heart rate monitor, a workout schedule, and starts training. The reader (as well as the author) questions how much effort he can give, how much can he learn in one year? How fast can one ski if one really focuses for a whole year on building endurance and speed? How competitive can a 38 year old become? What is it like to give a "supreme effort" at the very limit of what your body can do? Questions many of us probably ask ourselves, but don't have the luxury of taking a year off to train in order to find the answer.

His journey begins in the winter of '97-98 and he goes off to Craftsbury to the home of consistent and deep snow. He happens to arrive in time for the January 1998 ice storm — not an auspicious start for a year of training. That first winter McKibben gets his first taste of racing. He enters a citizen race and gets the first taste of that focus and drive that only a competition can offer. His appetite is whetted, despite a crash or two, lost glasses, a wrong turn and thick fog. He finishes in the middle of the pack for his age group.

While we follow his progress over the year of living strenuously, McKibben leads us down a series of tangents and anecdotes about skiing, each one well told and meaningful to the novice and the expert skier alike. We listen as he describes the heart and circulatory system of an athlete. We watch him obsess about which wax to use (I could relate) and we see him get exposed to gear worship when he sits down with the factory reps from Fischer and Swix. He gives a detailed and vivid description of getting VO2 max tested on the treadmill at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid. We also share in his secret worship of Bjorn Daehlie. The male readers will wince and the female readers laugh as he forgets his windbrief on a cold blustery day (Ouch!).

What McKibben also shows us are the more personal sides of this year of training. In the beginning we are introduced to his family and his parents. His father in particular is portrayed as kind and gentlemanly, self-assured and devoted in his professional and family life. As the story of McKibben's training regime progresses his family tragedy also unfolds. His father

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becomes ill and is diagnosed with brain cancer. His vigor is cut in a matter of weeks and he undergoes a series of radical procedures, all of which are just to buy time, with a cure never offered as a possibility. So, the author's year of improving and refining his body and mind, are juxtaposed against the decline of his father's physical and mental capabilities. McKibben, even when feeling his most powerful and vigorous, is never allowed to savor the feeling as his father's cancer forces him to face mortality almost every day.

In response to this tragedy, many others might have given up on the training regime. The author instead keeps up his workouts and we get the sense that it is one of the things that keeps him going. At times, the 4 hour workouts seem trivial compared to his father's struggles, but they also are a release. In the end he finds that the "zone" of race day is one of the few times he is truly able to focus and find some peace.

He finishes having accomplished much. He improves his VO2 max by 7%, decreases his body fat percentage to 6%, and has skied in many impressive places: Australia, Vermont, West Yellowstone, the Canadian Ski Marathon, and Lake Placid, in addition to his beloved Garnet Hill Ski Touring Center in the Adirondacks. In the end he refines his technique enough to become competitive in his age group at the Masters level. And he manages to give a "supreme effort" in the Canadian Ski Marathon outside of Ottawa.

It's a great read. The book is well paced and held my interest throughout. I could relate to the stories of being in the company of much better skiers and was inspired by McKibben's drive. He's writing about life as much as he's writing about skiing, but it's not a preachy book at all. The anecdotes and tales are at times humorous and always heartfelt. He writes in the way of telling a story to a friend. The impression I left with in the end is that McKibben is a hell of a guy and an excellent writer, not to mention an above average citizen ski racer.

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THE JOHN CALDWELL AWARD FOR 2001

by Fred Griffin, NENSA Executive Director

Four years of title sponsorship from Volvo, four years of continuous growth for NENSA, four years of increased visibility for cross country skiing in New England. The connection is as evident as the Volvo cars in the parking lots of Eastern Cup races. Is this the reason we gave the prestigious John Caldwell Award for service to the sport of cross country skiing in 2001 to Linda Gangeri and Rick Bryant of Volvo Cars of North America? Well, certainly it figures in, but there's more to it than that. It's a personal thing.

I remember making the phone call in late August of 1997 to the number I had acquired for Volvo's Marketing division. I had seen ads about the new AWD Cross Country wagon Volvo was introducing, so I felt it was worth a shot. I reached Linda Gangeri on what, I believe, was her first day on the job. I have no "You know, all of this sounds interesting, but before I go any further, I want to bring my team together to discuss it."

It took several more calls and at least five weeks before a meeting was arranged at the Springfield, MA, Marriot. Zach Caldwell and I showed up just a tad nervous. We had managed to get attention of a major international corporation renowned for quality and safety...now what were we going to do with it? It helped enormously that Linda and the four members of her team were welcoming and friendly. Not that they didn't ask the tough questions, mind you. Rick Bryant in particular put us through a grilling. But when it was over we had an agreement, mutual respect, and the beginnings of a friendship.

Over the next two years we worked jointly on numerous projects — BKL Festivals in Maine and at Trapp's Lodge, Eastern Cup races, clinics for Volvo retailers. As we got to know each other better certain things emerged: Linda would be highly organized, extraordinarily well-prepared, and satisfied with nothing less than excellence. In person she was a dynamo, decisive, tireless, quick-thinking, quick-moving, with eyes that missed nothing. At events, she was so petite she disappeared inside of one of those big green parkas we wore. Once the project moved from the talking to the doing, Rick was man who made things happen. Rick brought a multitude of outlooks and ideas along with a can-do, hands-on approach to any problem. Actually there were no problems for Rick — it all came down to picking the right solution. He liked to smile, he liked to laugh, and when he put on skis at those clinics, he liked to go fast.

I can tell you frankly that a sizeable portion of the increase in professionalism in NENSA races, workshops, presentations over the years can be traced directly to what Zach and I learned from working with Rick and Linda. And while there were solid business reasons behind their backing us, there was and continues on their part a personal interest in NENSA. From the beginning they were impressed by you, our cross country skiers. I remember them scratching their heads in wonder at how many people came up to them to thank them for supporting our sport. It is safe to say that both Rick and Linda have wanted us to succeed and have applauded our triumphs not only as businessmen but as true friends of the sport as well.

So it is with immense pleasure that we recognize the longstanding service to the sport of cross country skiing by Volvo Cars of North America, with a special nod to the vision, the talents, and the personal interests of Linda Gangeri and Rick Bryant. They've made a difference in how our sport works.

NENSA SUMMER CALENDAR

ROCK AND ROLL!

THE 2001 NEW ENGLAND ROLLERSKI/BEACHSKI SERIES
Presented by The New England Nordic Ski Association

Sun, June 24th: First Annual Cape Elizabeth Beach Ski and Relay Race

Cape Elizabeth, ME. Race time is 9:30 am (low tide). Meet at John Atwood's house and carpool to beach. Format: Mixed three person team relay. The course takes approx. 45 min. and grooming is guaranteed to be periodic. Freestyle, but classic style strongly recommended. This race has secured corporate sponsorship and is open to all NENSA clubs. Pot-luck brunch and awards ceremony to follow in the Atwoods' barn.

Contact David Roberts at (207) 767-3964
or John Atwood (207) 799-0099.

Sun, July 1: First Annual Rockaway Beach Ski Relay

Rockaway Beach, Queens, NY, 10:00 am. Manhattan Nordic Ski Club presents the first annual Rockaway Beach Ski Relay at Riis Park, Rockaway Beach, Queens, New York. Team format and distance to be determined. This is (currently) the second and final race in the series. Beach bar-b-q follows race and then a tour of world famous Coney Island for Boardwalk fun and Roller-Coaster excitement. The MNSC (NYC) will do our best to accommodate and advise all those interested in attending this event.

Contact Rick Chalmers at (212) 334-6506 or
rbc-ski@visto.com

As usual, all changes, updates, additions and deletions to the calendar can be found on the NENSA web site. Please go to www.nensa.net for current information.

Fri-Sun, August 10-12: Eastern Nordic Dryland Challenge*

Bolton Valley/Jericho, VT. Bolton Valley will offer special pricing for lodging and racing for the entire weekend.

Fri, Aug. 10, evening Rollerski, classic, 4.7 miles uphill climb.

Sat, Aug. 11, morning Cross-country run, 8km; afternoon Rollerski, skate, 12km.

Sun, Aug. 12, morning Rollerski, classic, 10km; afternoon Awards party.

*Race name subject to change. Contact Annie Crawford at (802) 434-3444 x 1076.

Sat, October 6: Rangeley Leaf Peeper Loppet
Rangeley, ME

5km uphill, classic, interval start. Start time 11 am at Rangeley Chamber of Commerce, downtown Main Street. Modest prize table.

Contact Jeff Foltz at 207/864-2122 or jfoltz@rangeley.org

Sun, October 28th: Pack Monadnock
Wilton, NH

(Daylight savings time change — set your clocks back!)

Hosted by CSU, this uphill race has withstood the test of time. Roll from Wilton to Temple, NH in Miller State Park, and up to the summit of Pack Monadnock.

Contact Bob Hamel at fe-bb@worldnet.att.net

Sunday, November 4: 13th Annual CSU Fall Classic
North Andover, MA.

15km, 2 lap course. Your entry fee goes toward prizes! Previous sponsorship has come from Jenex and the repeated kindness of Len Johnson.

Contact Jamie Doucett at jdoucett@mediaone.net or (978) 475-6323.

Sun, November 11: New England Roller Ski Championships
Cumberland, ME

Hosted by Coastal Nordic Ski Club

Start time 8:30 AM, Women 7.5 K, Men 15 K. Team Trophy (2 women & 2 men, combined time).

Contact: Chris Axelson, at axelson@worldnet.att.net.

FIRST ANNUAL NENSA WHITE MOUNTAIN HIKES

Hosted by Northeast Nordic Ski Club

August 18th, rain date August 19th

Open Invitation: NENSA and NorthEast Nordic Ski club invite NENSA clubs, skiers, BKL members and their families to some of the finest views and extended ridge-walking in New England. Three hikes of graduated difficulty are scheduled for the day, all worthy, all exciting.

1) Franconia Ridge Hike: This is one of the classic White Mountain hikes, with inspiring views and open, exposed ridges. Great for families as well.

- Meet at 8:30 at Lafayette Place parking lot on the southbound side of Franconia Notch Thruway. NE Nordic club members will be there to greet you and to provide maps.

- Ascend Falling Waters trail to Lafayette Ridge, hike north up the ridge to Mt. Lafayette and descend the Old Bridle Path. The AMC hut is open for water, COFFEE! and snacks. Total distance for the day is about 8 miles. John Caldwell will lead this adventure.

2) Franconia Ridge (Extended): The same great views and open ridge-walking, only more of it!!

- Depart from Flume Visitor Center Parking Lot at 7:00 AM, ascend Flume Slide Trail to Franconia Ridge, Bag Mt Flume, Liberty, Haystack, Lincoln, and Lafayette before descending on Skookumchuck Trail. No water sources after reaching

Franconia Ridge.

- Walk/jog the bike path back to the Flume Parking lot.

This jaunt will total +/-19 miles and will be led by Fred Griffin.

3) Gunners OD Hike: This monster hike is the brainchild of JO coach Chris Axelson who actually claims to have done it himself.

- Depart from Flume Visitor Center Parking Lot at 7:00 AM, ascend Flume Slide Trail to Franconia Ridge then hoof it to Lafayette, on to Garfield, North and South Twin, Guyot, Bond (stunning views!) before descending to Bondcliff, then down to the Wilderness Trail and exit at the Lincoln Woods Ranger Station/ parking lot where the Pemigewasset River crosses the Kancamagus highway.. This hike is approximately 30 miles and includes (12), 4000 foot summits. It is a full day adventure requiring careful prep, and plenty of food and water. Water is only available at the start and the Galehead Hut 16 miles in to the hike. You must be able to run/trot the flats to complete this hike in daylight. Chris Axelson and Zach Caldwell will lead this testing (grueling) trip. Do it if you dare....

Contact Fred at the Administrative Office with any questions about these hikes.

Changes to trip itineraries, weather delays will be posted on the NENSA website.

New England Nordic Ski Association

presents

Gaining Ground

A Coaches' Education and Certification Clinic

What: NENSA is offering a comprehensive 3-day clinic for coaches of all levels in the highly acclaimed "Gaining Ground" series. Level 1 and Level 2 certification will be available in the areas of *Training and Physiology, Strength and Technique, and Communication Skills.*

Where/When: Ethan Allen Nordic Center of Excellence, Jericho, VT
Friday 7/13 – Sunday 7/15

Cost: \$190.00; NENSA Coaches \$170.00

Price includes lodging, meals, instruction, site use, clinic manual, certifications testing

Presenters:

Dick Taylor
Member and Coach, US Ski Team
Head Coach, Gould Academy

Dr. Don Christie
Doctor Sports Medicine
Clients include 2001 World Champ. Team member
David Chamberlain

Patrick Cote
NENSA Program Director
U of VT, Dartmouth team skier
Coach, Gould Academy

Fred Griffin
NENSA Executive Director
Coach, Northeast Nordic Ski Club

Tracey Theyerl
Head Coach, Colby College
Master of Health, U of Wyoming

Synopsis: This clinic has been designed to:

- ground coaches in the fundamentals of teaching classical and freestyle technique
- provide coaches with dryland drills designed to build strength and technique
- introduce coaches to sound teaching methodologies

Also:

"Cross-Country Skiing and American Culture" by Dick Taylor

"Women's Issues in Nordic Sport" by Tracey Theyerl

"Physiology and Nutrition" by Don Christie

"Planning Practices" by Those Present

Roundtable small group discussions will focus on topical issues specific to high school, BKL, and Club coaches

Level I and II Certification available!!

Check website for clinic updates: www.nensa.net

Register now to reserve your spot!

COACHES' CORNER

CLUBS

ONE QUESTION WE WISH WE'D THOUGHT OF ASKING TO STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION WITH A STRANGER WAITING BESIDE US ON THE START LINE

Let's not beat around the bush (there might be someone crouching behind it): What color is your pee?

Whether you're serious about skiing or not, everyone should be monitoring the color of their urine everyday, every season. It's easier than taking your morning heart rate. Easier to correct than your body weight or body fat percentage. It's the most important thing you can do for your overall health and for your overall performance: STAY HYDRATED. Pee clear, you win. Pee yellow, you're operating at 5-10% lower capacity. At the elite level, that means running or skiing a 19:48 5k instead of an 18:00 5k. At the everyday level, dehydration means headaches, body aches, increased chance of colon cancer, stomach ulcers, obesity, heart disease, you name it. You're 70% water and your brain is 80%. Drink a glass and do the math.

So quaff, sip, slurp, glug, chug, do whatever you can to drink water. Everyone should be drinking their body weight (in pounds) divided by two, ounces of water per day. For every ounce of coffee, soda, or alcohol you drink, add the same number of ounces of water to your total intake. And when you exercise, add at least another 4 ounces of water for every 15 minutes you're out moving. Training at altitude? Drink even more. Think this means you'll have to pee every other hour? You're right. That's why we train in the woods.

"A pint's a pound the world around," is your new mantra. Step on the scale before you leave for your run. Weigh yourself when you get back. No, you can't eat a pint of Ben and Jerry's for every pound of weight you just lost. Drink a pint of water, and you'll be back on track.

This offering is submitted by Dorcas Denhartog.

NENSA CLUB NOTES

Send your Club news to Rob Bradlee at rbradlee@yahoo.com

Are your kids urged by their coaches to play indoor soccer all winter? Spring soccer leagues? Summer soccer camps? Achieving excellence as a Junior, Senior, or Master athlete requires year-round dedication. NENSA Executive Director Fred Griffin has taken on as his new theme the expansion of NENSA into providing events in every month of the year. NENSA clubs are an integral part of this process as the driving forces behind many of these new or expanded off-season training activities. Check the web page (www.nensa.net) for the latest list of events.

My favorites are the two (so far) beach races on the schedule. Those folks we like to call Mainiacs at the Maine Nordic Ski Club held the Cape Elizabeth Beach Relay in June. No doubt escaping black flies was half the motivation to keep moving, but it is also true that beach skiing is one tough strength workout. Look out for these skiers this winter (they will be the ones carrying surf boards and calling everyone "dude!"). Following the success of their first foray into non-traditional ski competition the MSNC joined up with the fabled Manhattan Ski Club to put their show on the road with a July 1st race in Queens. New Yorkers are used to a pluralistic society with many cultural oddities, but the sight of semi-clad Viking racers storming down the beach drew more attention than a photo shoot for Baywatch. Sure Bill Koch can ski in Hawaii, but is he tough enough to handle New York's sands?

The schedule is full of camps for every age group, every ability, and for both racers and coaches. Bolton Valley is hosting a big rollerski race weekend in August. The Rangeley club invites you all to come for a great foliage drive capped off with a fun rollerski race. This fall CSU will host two rollerski races. The first includes a climb of Pack Monadnock in NH that is rumored to be tougher than any race on the winter schedule. The other race tours the Starter Castle area of million dollar homes in North Andover MA. After warming up with these races you can head to Cumberland ME just outside Portland for the NE Roller Ski Championships.

The big social event of the summer season will no doubt be the hike day scheduled for August 18th. Every club can send forth their toughest racers for the Monster 30 mile hike while the rest of us enjoy shorter but equally lovely hikes through the White Mountains. This will be a great chance to hike along with John Caldwell and pester America's greatest coach with technique questions — as long as they are about how to properly homebrew beer. The only way to find out his techniques is to show up and enjoy a great hike. See you there.



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PERSPECTIVE

INTERVIEW: ZACH CALDWELL

Zach Caldwell served NENSA for five and a half years, as Manager in the first year of NENSA's existence, and then as Program Director. He's leaving that position, but he's not going far; he will continue as the U.S. Ski Team's Eastern Regional Development Coordinator, coaching and running the Eastern Residency Program at Stratton Mountain. He adds that he also needs to earn a living, and that if any of us hear of a good job for him, let him know!

We have broken Zach's interview into 2 parts because we couldn't bear to edit his stories in the interest of newsletter space! Here is the first part, where Zach looks back at his time as Program Director. In the next issue we will bring you Zach's perspective on the future.

You helped launch a number of development programs for New England racers when you were Program Director. Tell us a bit about these.

The first big push was the Eastern Cup Series. Prior to the organization of NENSA the only "big" races during the season were the Junior Olympic Qualifiers. My

very first proposal to the NENSA board was to replace these races with a series geared toward all age groups. This led to the development of race organizer's guidelines (originally authored by Pete Hendel), the consistent presence of NENSA staff at major events, the practice of running all age classes together, seeded by points, etc. It also led to a sponsorship agreement with VOLVO which really got NENSA off the ground.

Another big push was the focus on clubs as the basic tool for athlete development. On a drive back from one of the first Eastern Cup races Shams Helminski and I had a long conversation about skier development. I was talking about changing the schedule around, introducing Eastern Cup events in December (which we did the next year) and Shams made the point that skiers get fast in the Summer, not in December. I had to concede the point. So I asked Shams how he thought we should get folks to do more organized training in the Summer. "Make them join clubs" was his answer. Our first idea was to simply FORCE people to join a club. We got past that pretty quickly. But then we started talking about charging more money for NENSA members who didn't belong to clubs, then we had to try to sell it to the Board, at our Spring meeting at Holderness where the Board was seated on the stage, with Fred and me, facing a big audience. The two of us talked and argued with the Board for what seemed like an hour. Finally a proposal was approved to scale down the "penalty" (we weren't supposed to call it that) for not being a club member to something like \$5. The original proposal had basically double the membership fee for non club members. Anyway, that launched the big club push which has resulted in something over 70 registered clubs today. The next push is going to be to get those clubs to do a little more to develop skiers!

Finally, I'll mention the points system. I'm not sure when the NENSA point system was actually introduced, but that was the easy part. The points are based on the same math as the FIS points system (you can read all about it in the Competition Guide) and they allow competitors to compare themselves (roughly) with the best skiers in the world. In order to create a scoring base I retroactively scored all of the races from the previous season using a racer's FIS points if they were available or else using the FIS-standard of 160 points to calculate penalties. Then I took the resulting points and used them as a base to rescore all of the same races over again in order to "normalize" the points. In fact, I may have even done that twice. That was the basis for the new points list in the next season. The big push to make the points system useful came in using it to seed races and eventually in using to select the JO Team.

It's important to note that none of these programs were developed in a vacuum. A lot of the programs that I worked to get into place weren't even my ideas to begin with. I was always being fed new ideas by people inside and outside of the organization.

You put in many hours coaching as Program Director, at clinics for athletes of all ages as well as at coaches clinics, as well as coaching NE athletes at National and International levels. Tell us something about these coaching experiences.

It's no secret that I'm a lousy administrator. My favorite part of the job was always working with skiers. It's been quite a learning process and I'm very thankful for the education it's given me. I had never done any teaching to speak of when I started doing clinics and it showed. The first clinic I ever did was up in Rumford where I talked to a bunch of middle school

kids about Physiology for about an hour and a half. When I finally let the poor kids out of the room to demonstrate some dryland training I almost killed one of them by letting go of the elastic harness that was around his waist. I bet the kid still has scars on his butt! Anyway, I've learned a lot about the type of information that people can absorb and use, and how best to present it. The testing programs that I put together for Elite and Development team skiers gave me a chance to work with Dr. Ken Rundell at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid. That was (and continues to be) a hands-on education in physiology. It was also an opportunity to work directly with some of the best athletes in New England. I can't claim to have directly coached many of the hotshots, but I got lots of opportunities to talk about training, work on technique and generally be associated with some very good skiers.

Perhaps the biggest highlight of working with elite athletes was working with Marc Gilbertson when he was gearing up to try out for the Nagano Olympic team in the Summer and Fall of 1997. We talked at a couple of testing camps and then we got together for one or two training and technique sessions. Once he came down to Putney and was

NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

preparing to do some running intervals during which I was going to take some lactate measurements. I had him use my heart rate monitor so that I could download the data onto my computer and as he was adjusting the transmitter I looked at the watch to see if it was reading correctly. He'd been running around for a warm-up and was now standing in the woods, messing around with transmitters and such. The watch said that his heart rate was 52. "It's not working," I said. Marc replied, "No, that's about right." Holy cow, is that guy fit! When he went to the Gold Cup in Lake Placid to try to make the Olympic Team he pretty much had to win the 30K Skate race because he wasn't going to classic ski fast enough to have a chance at the pursuit. I was out on the course watching and taking splits about 2K from the end of the 7.5K lap. I don't know if I've ever been so excited watching a race.

Well, maybe I was that excited one other time. In the summer of 1999 Kris Freeman asked me to help him plan his training. He was at school up at UVM that Fall and we got together once in Burlington when I happened to be up there but generally we were in touch every couple of weeks by phone or e-mail. He was doing some training with the UVM team but was pretty much on his own as far as planning was concerned. I saw him at several early season races and he was feeling really good. Probably in large part because his training hours for December were MUCH lower than they had been all Fall. On Christmas Eve Kris and his brother Justin came down to Grafton to do a 30K time trial in preparation for the 30K at US Nationals. There wasn't much snow around so they did 30 1K laps around Grafton's snowmaking loop. I took splits every lap and took lactate readings every ten laps. Otherwise I just watched those guys hammer each other on abrasive man made snow (I think their kick wax wore off after about three laps). Justin won that workout but Kris was National Champion in the 30K at US Nationals. Shortly after Kris started the race at Nationals I was standing in the start pen adjusting the wax on Justin's skis (I blew the wax horribly and I'm pretty sure that Justin suffered more than anybody else who finished that day — incidentally, I didn't wax Kris' skis). Peter Graves was announcing the race from the start pen and I heard somebody radio to him from 2.5 K into the race that Kris Freeman was leading by 40 seconds. I just laughed. Peter looked at me quizzically and I told him that I thought Kris had started a little "optimistically". After the race Kris told me he had been thinking the same thing at the time.

Ed. Note: Zach also had a great story about waxing "hyperactive" masters racers — who made JO racers later that month seem easy — at the Lake Placid Masters World Cup in '98, where he was so successful with his waxing combinations that whole flocks of skiers were migrating to his end of the stadium to persuade him to wax their skis. But we ran out of room for that. Just ask him about it!

INTERVIEW: PATRICK COTE

As of May 1, 2001 Patrick Cote has taken on the job of Program Director for the New England Nordic Ski Association. Welcome Pat!!

Tell us about your involvement in cross country skiing up to this point.

I grew up in Farmington, Maine which had an active Bill Koch League program coached by Tom and Judy Upham. I stayed in the Farmington program until I was in high school when I left for Gould Academy. In college I skied for UVM for two years before transferring to Dartmouth to finish my college career. For the last two years I have been racing for the Alpina Racing Team and coaching at Gould Academy where I also taught English and lived in a dormitory.

What are some strengths and experiences that you bring to the job of Program Director?

As a racer, I have gone through the development pipeline in New England. I think that made me aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Those years also gave me pretty good connections within the sport and I feel good about my ability to work with the skiers, coaches, and race sites in New England. And most importantly, I love skiing.

What are some of the things you are most looking forward to in your new job?

I am most looking forward to working with coaches throughout New England and figuring out ways that NENSA, as a governing body of skiing in New England, can help them do their jobs more effectively. In other words, identifying the places where we can step in to help give more people a positive skiing experience with the ultimate goal of developing faster skiers.

Tell us some of your priorities and goals for New England cross country skiing in the next couple of years.

If we can raise the number of people who enjoy cross country skiing, then I would feel like I had accomplished something in this job. I would like to work with the club system so that clubs become a more integral part of a skier's life. I think that a continuation and strengthening of the coaches' education program is part of this. I'd also like to figure out ways to get local ski shops involved with NENSA more actively. The reason that I started skiing was because my family stumbled into Tom Upham's store looking to buy Alpine skis. We left with cross country skis and started going to the Bill Koch League races and practices that he recommended.

What do you think are the most important factors for developing skiers capable of international success?

The factors include: good coaching; a culture that values skiing (school teams and clubs can do a great job with this); a developmental pipeline that gives kids regional, national, and international experience; and various support networks for each individual athlete.

What can we be doing at the regional level toward this goal?

At the regional level, we should figure out ways to raise the level of skiing, in general, so that developing skiers have a better idea of what it takes to succeed internationally. We should encourage coaches at all levels to look past their own "leagues" and toward the horizon of international success. Each of us needs to ask, "How can I best help my athlete get to that level?" Also, we need to figure out ways to more effectively support the athlete who chooses to keep skiing on the senior elite level, like those in the Eastern Residency Center.

Pat asks you to contact him at pat@nensa.net to comment on the written thoughts above or if you have ideas for providing support for elite level athletes.



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JO TEAM LEADERSHIP CHANGES

by Fred Griffin

When Dennis Donahue decided this spring not to continue as Team Leader for the New England JO Team, he ended an era in New England skiing. Dennis's tenure predated NENSA. He took over a program that was inconsistent at best and chaotic at worst. He established a wax box, standardized travel arrangements, watchdogged every penny, added coaches, and created a template for succeeding team leaders to follow. As a result Dennis stabilized one of our foundation programs. He gave it respect. He gave it integrity. Dennis, we salute you for your many years of selfless service!

Jeff Hixon has been named as the Team Leader of the 2002 New England JO Team. Jeff is the co-coach of Northeast Nordic Ski Club, has been an EHSC Team Leader and has served as a coach on the New England JO squad the last two years. Jeff will work with NENSA staff and name a Head Coach shortly. The entire slate of coaches will be brought before the Junior Committee by Jeff for approval before the end of the summer.

Applications are being accepted for New England JO Team Head Coach and Coaches.

Send cover letter and resume to Fred at the Administrative Office.

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NORDIC NEWS

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