



new england NORDIC NEWS

LATE WINTER 1999 VOL. 4, NO. 3

U.S. JUNIORS RACE IN SCANDINAVIA

This year the U.S. Ski Team sponsored a trip to Scandinavia for J1 racers (ages sixteen and seventeen) for the purpose of introducing our top young junior racers to the larger world of ski racing. A generous grant from the National Cross Country Ski Education Foundation helped defray trip costs. Five junior men and five women were named to the J1 Europa Cup Sweden trip based on their results at the U.S. Nationals in Rumford, Maine: Geoff Atkinson, Brayton Osgood, Colin Rodgers, Ryan Quinn, Tom Temple, Aniya Deitz, Kristen Fairman, Margaret Maher, Melody Scheefer, and Caitlin Yarborough. These juniors were led by coach Chris Grover, currently a coach with the Mount Bachelor Ski Education Foundation, and once in Sweden they were joined by Swedish coach Karin Lamberg. The racing highlight of their trip was the Scandinavian Cup on February 6-7. What follows is an account written by Brayton Osgood, who we hear enjoyed it so much over there that his parents weren't exactly sure if he was going to be on the plane home or not!

The first week of our trip was spent training in Mora, Sweden. We stayed at a training and testing center only a hundred meters from the nearest ski trail. There was very little natural snow in Sweden, so we were either skiing on man made snow, or we had to travel to higher elevations around Mora where there was enough natural snow for grooming. On one day we skate skied on the World Cup course at Gurundklitt just a half hour north of Mora. We did the majority of our skiing on a two kilometer loop around the stadium in Mora. It was a ten minute ski away from where we stayed via the Vasaloppet trail. The entire town of Mora is caught up in the Vasaloppet. It's a 90 kilometer race that starts in Salen and commemorates the ski route taken by the leader of Swedish resistance against the Danes in the sixteenth century. The organizing committee was in the process of preparing the trail, which all required manmade snow. The snowmaking operation was the biggest I've ever seen, and the organizing committee estimated it would cost them nearly half a million dollars.

During the second week we competed in four races. The first two were local races where there were classes for all juniors. Most of the competitors were Bill Koch League age, and the J1 races were more like time trials for our group than anything

else.

The last weekend we traveled to Sundsvall for the Scandinavian Cup races. We competed against the top six J1s from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia. These were the competitions that we made the trip for, and it was an eye-opening experience. The highest individual place we got was a 16th, and both our relay teams were 8th. The conditions were very icy, and the course was almost dead flat with lots of tight turns and short, steep uphill. It seemed that the Scandinavians just didn't let the course or conditions affect them when it was time to race; they just went and skied hard anyway. Though none of us placed very well in the big races, we weren't very far back in terms of time, and we all left inspired to train harder over the next year.

Ed. Note: A lively and detailed account, complete with photos, can be found at <http://www.alaska.net/~lfy>

Brayton Osgood

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FROM THE EDITORS

We bumped into each other a few weeks ago in Rumford, Maine, at the U.S. National Cross Country Ski Championships. Mary was there to cheer on her youngest daughter, racing at her first Nationals at the age of fourteen, and Anne was there to cheer on some friends and attend a few meetings. Spectating out on the race course was exciting, with famed "High School Hill" entirely lined with loudly cheering race fans during the second day of the pursuit. We met up with all sorts of interesting people — Bill Koch (there are several interesting articles on him in the latest "Master Skier" including a great photo of beach skiing); Max Cobb, program director for the U.S. Biathlon association and a founding member of the Upper Valley Nordic club; former Olympians and now Maine coaches Sue Long and Dorcas Wonsavage; and Paul Robbins, preeminent cross country ski journalist, just to name a few.

The weather was typically New England, going from post-ice-storm to brilliant sunny weather and back to rain for the final distance races. The Rumford trail crews once again cheerfully shovelled for hours, dug drainage ditches and laid pipes in key places to keep the trails in good condition. It was a great time.

We watched Nina Kempfel win a record five National titles and also be a terrific role model as she talked with and encouraged the younger women. Nina and her Gold2002 teammate Wendy Wagner both made the U.S. team to the World Championships, along with native New Englanders Tessa Benoit, Jen Douglas, Marcus Nash and Pat Weaver (naming of the full team, and W.C. results can be found on the U.S. Ski Team web site: www.usskiteam.com). The battle for places on the World Junior Championships team was exciting, as was the competition among the J1 young men and women for the Scandinavian team. Eastern skiers Kris Freeman, Ethan Foster, Justin Beckwith, and Hilary Patzer all made the W.J.C. team. Colin Rodgers, Brayton Osgood, Geoff Atkinson, Tom Temple, Margaret Maher and Anna Sprague all made the J1 Scandinavian team. Be sure to read Brayton's report from the trip on our front page.

Our hats off to the race crews at Rumford, and congratulations to the athletes who went on to represent the U.S. in Scandinavia and Europe.

Happy skiing!
Anne Donaghy
Mary Hamel
Co-editors

NEW ENGLAND NORDIC NEWS

is published six times a year as a membership benefit of the New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA). 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 (for example, if you want your copy of NENN right away!) send in your membership fee with your request for the membership form — it's \$25 for the first member of the family (\$35 if not affiliated with a club), and \$15 for each additional family member (\$25 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.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP IN NENSA

The NENSA Board of Directors has approved the following Life Membership rates: Individual (\$500); Couple (\$600); Family, including children up to age 17 (\$750). NENSA has also received recognition from the IRS as a tax-exempt organization. All donations made to NENSA from November 1995 forward are fully tax deductible. If you have questions regarding life membership or donations to NENSA, contact the NENSA administrative office or Joe Walsh at 603-643-1207; email: joe.walsh@dartmouth.edu.

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NENN DEADLINES

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

Winter (January) issue: November 15
Late Winter (March) issue: January 25
Spring (May) issue: March 25
Summer (July) issue: May 25
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.

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

MARGARET MAHER: FROM BILL KOCH LEAGUE TO RACING IN SWEDEN

At the recent national championships held in Rumford, Maine, NENN was able to talk with former Bill Koch skier Margaret Maher. The qualifying races for the US World Junior Team and a brand new venture for J1s, the US Europa Cup Sweden trip were held in conjunction with the championships. Margaret was selected to be part of the Europa Cup Team and left on January 23rd for two weeks in Sweden.

NENN: Margaret, two questions we generally ask former Bill Koch skiers are when did you start skiing and what influence has your family had in your skiing success?

Margaret: What age did I start skiing? Two. My parents used to ski with me on their back in a pack. I didn't want to stay there anymore. Later, my Dad was race coordinator and he always helped out at our Bill Koch practices. My Mom was always there to help out; timing and cheering. My brothers, Marty and Patrick, also participated in the Bill Koch program. Patrick still does.

NENN: Thinking back, what are your best memories of your time in the Bill Koch League?

Margaret: When I went to my first Bill Koch Festival in Jackson, NH, it was only my fourth race ever and I came in 10th. I couldn't believe it and my parents couldn't believe it. And I got a medal for it, too!

In my last Koch Festival, I skied the first leg of the relay. I won by six seconds. I had never won anything in New England before, I was really excited! At the same festival at Bretton Woods, I came around the last corner in the individual race and you needed to ski about a half a kilometer to the finish. It felt like you were at the Lillehammer Olympics. There were all kinds of people cheering and ringing cowbells.

Also, we used to have fun day at Mountain Top at the end of the year; like a party. There was a biathlon course where we shot at balloons attached to hay bales. They used a snow cat to build a jump, too, and we had slalom races. There was a parent/kid relay that I did with Sarah Gallagher.

I remember going to a Bill Koch camp at the Lake Placid Olympic Training Center. We did a circuit run along a really muddy trail. What a mess! It was fun though.

NENN: Are there other people, besides your parents, who have influenced you over the years in skiing?

Margaret: Nadia Beach-Conger was the VT State Champion skiing for Mt. Mansfield High School when I was in 5th grade. She was my idol. I still have her picture on a shelf in my room. She went on to ski for Middlebury College.

And of course my coach, Mike Gallagher, because he helps me with everything I could possibly need for skiing; like training plans, mental preparation, and reinforcing in me that, "I will ski fast."

NENN: When did you start to actually train for skiing?

Margaret: Probably in 6th or 7th grade. I'm not exactly sure when I started to train. When I was in Bill Koch League, we only met once a week and I just skied on the other days. It really wasn't until 9th grade that I had a coach who told me what to do.

NENN: What do you do to keep training fun now?

Margaret: I go to camps and train with lots of people in the winter. Training with friends is fun. Training, itself is fun because it gives you a sense of accomplishment. When you finish with a really hard workout, it's satisfying!

NENN: This has been quite a week for you. How did you feel about making the Europa Cup Team?

Margaret: I'm very excited to be going overseas and getting to race against Scandinavian girls. It will be interesting to see how we do in comparison to them.

SPRING NENSA MEETING

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1:00 PM
HOLDERNESS SCHOOL

Some committees will meet in the morning.
All members welcome. Call the office for details,
driving directions, etc.



MASTERS

VOLVO NENSA MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

by Rob Bradlee

Is Bob Gray really 59 years old? I don't think so. In the Men's 10K classic race he tied for 3rd fastest overall time, close on the ski tails of men twenty years his junior. That's the excitement of Masters racing: seeing ski racers who defy age and pursue excellence with the vigor of elite competitors.

We may be old, but we know more about having a good time than those overly serious elite skiers. At our awards banquet on Saturday night we had live music, great food, gobs of merchandise prizes both for winners and via a raffle, and a side-splitting presentation from Murray Banks exploring the agony and ecstasy of skiing. We also know that you can't have a ski racing championships without a relay. Saturday afternoon twenty-six club teams lined up for a 3 x 2K freestyle relay. The Maine Masters team of Kirk Siegel, Sue Foster, and Karl Johnson won going away. Thanks to a blistering anchor effort by Keith Woodward, the Northern Vermont team took second with Peter Harris and Pat Driscoll skiing the first two legs. The CSU team of Bob Haydock, Jane Oliver, and Jim Stock defeated for third their arch-rival Putney team of Chris Osgood, Mary Heller Osgood, and Bob Gray. Another notable result was the first place for 50-59 age teams which saw the aptly-named "Putney Old Farts" team of Charlie Kellog, Trina Hosmer, and Dave Hosmer take an easy win. No doubt Charlie is skiing fast thanks to his training with CSU. And dominating the over 60 group was the Vermont trio of Dave Boucher and Charlotte and George Hall. Olympic Gold Medalist Joan Benoit made the mistake of racing with two running buddies instead of accepting the offer of free membership in CSU, and so wasn't in the hunt for medals. At least this year Anne Donaghy didn't knock her down and stab her with her ski pole.

Sugarloaf did its usual professional job of hosting the ski races. This is the third year of consistent excellence and CSU made a special presentation to manager Sue Foster and to her husband and ace trail-groomer Karl Johnson. Sue received a huge bouquet of flowers while Karl received a case of micro-brew beer to relax with after a long day of grooming. Both received loud applause for their hard work. If "the Loaf" were only a few miles closer and had some affordable lodging, I'd recommend that every race be held there.

Sunday's skate race meant not only competition for medals in that race, but also determining who would be named to the NENSA Masters Championship Team. Starts were done every two minutes by five year age group. In the women's race the groups sorted out without any close battles. However, the women's F4 class saw an interesting situation when Saturday's third place finisher, Jody Newton, finished first and Saturday's winner, Jane Oliver, landed in third. Jane Banks finished second both days. That made for a three-way tie for the Team scoring.

In the men's races there were some very tactical (read: way slow) first laps with hard attacks and mad sprints on the second

lap. In M1 Terry McNatt just out-sprinted first-time Master racer Jay Davis from Upper Valley Nordic. In M2 Joe Holland bided his time and then made a decisive move to open a gap on Kirk Siegal and Dan Works. In M3 the pack broke apart when Jim Stock had his pole stepped on (and the handle broken), giving Rob Bradlee the chance to break away from Scott Wade and Joe Bouscaren. Jim gamely skied on to finish fifth. Keith Woodward dominated M4, but having missed the classic race the day before, was out of the running for the Team. Murray Banks had an easy win (and one of the top overall times) in the M5. In M6 John Brodhead worked hard to open a gap over Bob Gray to win the tie-breaker of combined time for the team place. The final difference was only 1.6 second for the two races. Wow!

Fortunately, the generosity of sponsor VoMax made it possible to name co-winners in the case of all ties, so that all members of the team received beautiful VoMax tights.

The 1999 Masters Championship team is: F1: Annette Brickley, F3: Susan Foster, F4: Jane Oliver, Jody Newton, and Jane Banks, F5: Trina Hosmer, F6: Sally Swenson, F7: Charlotte Hall. M1: Jay Davis, M2: Joe Holland, M3: Rob Bradlee, M4: Peter Harris, M5: Murray Banks, M6: John Brodhead and Bob Gray, M7: David Boucher, M8: Steve Swenson, M9: Owen Haskell.

Masters page by Bob Haydock

Concord, Mass

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Bob's great "Cross Country Skiing in New England" page has a new URL:

<<http://www.nexski.com>> The old URL will still get you there for a few weeks, but for direct access, update your bookmark.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: NENSA CLUBS AND WHY WE PROMOTE THEM

by Fred Griffin

NENSA Clubs. What's the big deal? Why start one? Why join one? 18 months ago none existed, but as I write there are 43 NENSA Clubs registered with the Administrative Office. So what's going on? Why and how are they working? Let's take a look at one.

Northeast Nordic Ski Club, which I co-coach with Jeff Hixon, is tiny compared to the NENSA behemoths like Cambridge Sports Union, Putney Ski Club, Berkshire Trails, Maine Masters... they boast over a hundred members while we barely creep into double digits. We have seven junior racers, one nationally recognized skier whose travels rarely allow us to see him, two college students who train and race occasionally, and a master skier who lives for back-country adventures. And of course there are a dozen or more scattered alumni, some still competing, some not, who drop in and out of training sessions and off-season workouts as their spirit moves them. They add to our day whenever they do.

For Kelsey Allen, Emily Jacobs, Kate Spencer, Nathan Spencer, Ian Foshay, Zach Treamer, and James Letson, NE Nordic must at times seem all-consuming as they try to wedge normal adolescent pursuits into their disappearing lives. The club has claimed their weekends since November 1st and will do so until April. But they are intensely motivated to improve themselves as racers, and are willing to make extraordinary sacrifices to do so. NE Nordic provides them the structure — the training, teaching, coaching, and social support in which they can develop.

Jon Dodge and Michael Holmes love xc skiing and raced with the club through high school. Both are now college students, but both train and race with the club whenever their schedule permits. The club provides them with a skiing community, a social and competitive group whose activities they tailor to meet their needs.

Cory Smith is one of the top skiers in our country, coming off 4th, 5th, and 6th places in the Nationals at Rumford. When he is in the East he checks in with us. He relates to the younger skiers well. When he makes a workout the kids glow and think about it for days.

Joe Seguin is a veteran back country skier who trains doggedly and enthusiastically with the club spring, fall, and winter. He joins us for camp activities and long workouts, but retreats into the boreal woods of the Northeast Kingdom when we head to the races. NE Nordic gives Joe a chance to work with kids, improve his fitness, improve his technique. And when we follow him into the woods, roles reverse — Joe becomes a teacher.

Jeff and I work with each club member to set his/her own goals within the framework of his/her individualized 4-season program. Focus is on performance first, outcomes second. We communicate with each other and with club members weekly via email. Jeff's wife, Erica, accompanies the racing group to camps, races, and practices, keeps everyone honest, and is attentive everywhere to details.

Club dues go into a pool from which food at camps, waxes, and transportation are drawn. Since the racing group eats, sleeps, and travels

a great deal, they pay more. Dues are nominal for the others. Coaches don't draw salaries. NE Nordic gives us the chance to teach, the chance to ski and sometimes to race, and the opportunity for fellowship in a sport we dearly love. We should ask for more?

That's the NE Nordic profile — can we draw generalizations from how it works and apply them to successful NENSA clubs everywhere? I think so. Take a look below.

- Clubs provide social support for all their members. They are xc ski communities whose environment is positive, supportive, and nurturing of the diverse needs of all their members.
- Clubs allow for younger and novice skiers to benefit from the training and expertise of older, more experienced members
- Clubs enable developing skiers of all ages to receive appropriate instruction
- Clubs offer organized, year-round training activities for their members.
- Clubs provide racing support for their racing members-
- transportation, waxing assistance, race strategy, finish-line assistance
- Clubs provide established and reliable lines of communication between members

If you are a ski racer, an avid skier, or a supporter of ski racers and want more, expect more, from the sport than it is offering, give some thought to forming a club or joining an existing club. Contact the NENSA Administrative Office for resources to help you locate, begin, or broaden a x-c ski club.

NENSA NEEDS:

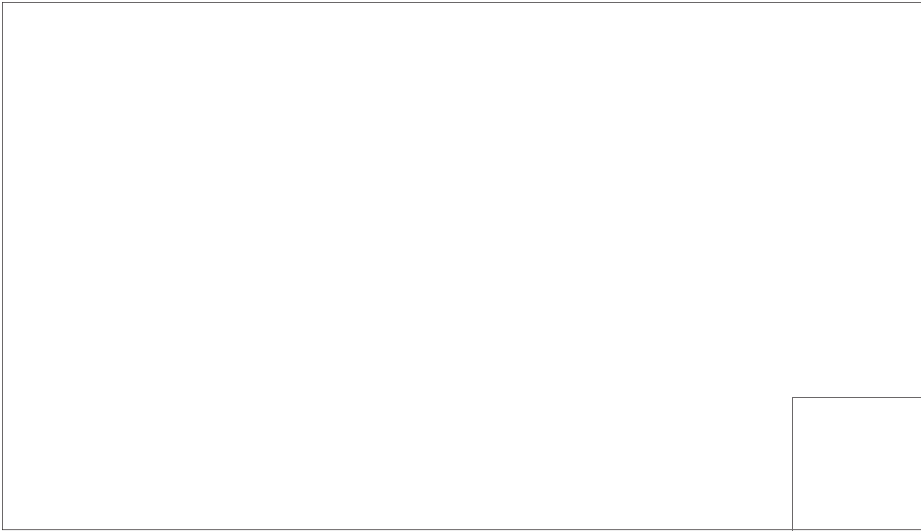
- working copier
- digital camera
- laptop computer
- file cabinet
- desktop computer and printer

CAN YOU HELP WITH THESE ITEMS?

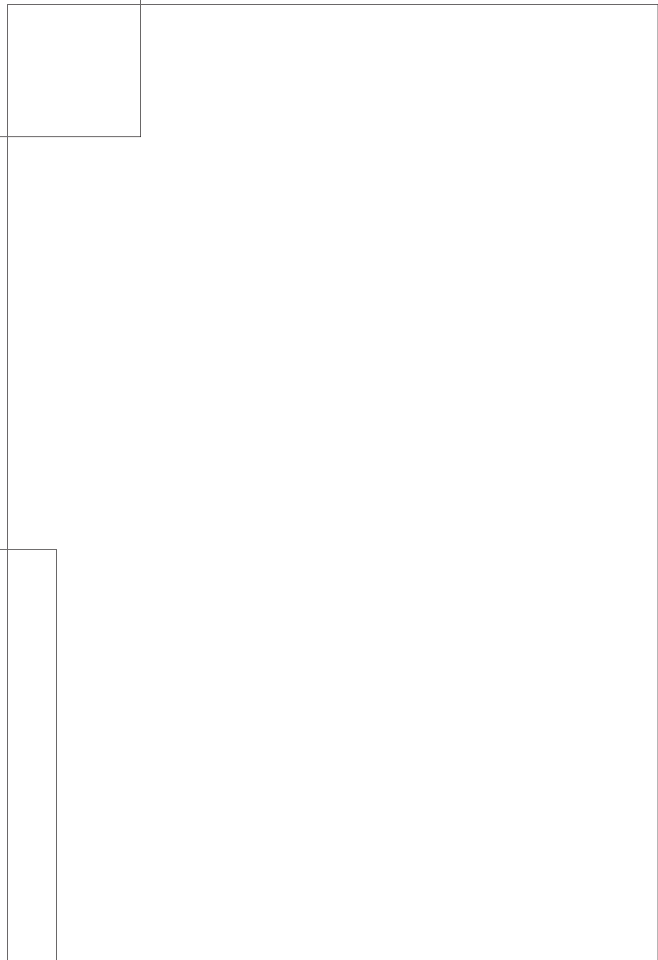
Contact the Administrative Office
at 802-849-2270.

SKIPIX

Missing the familiar Calendar section? There were so few new entries this month, we opted to skip it and run these photos instead. For calendar information, visit NENSA's Web page or call the office if necessary (contact info is on page 2).

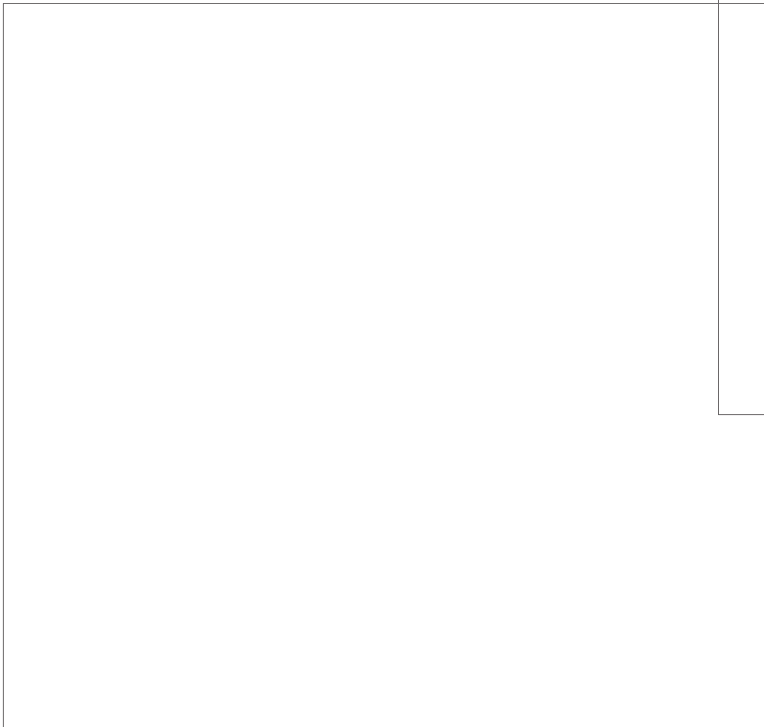


Scramble leg of the Mixed Relay — 1999 NENSA Masters Championships.
Photo: Chuck Wooster



Skiing and basking at Burke EC/JOQ.
Photo: Chuck Wooster

Hilary Patzer moves up in the Women's Pursuit,
US Nationals, Rumford, ME.



MORE TRAVELING JUNIORS

1998 MAINE/BC NORDIC SKI EXCHANGE

by Ethan Masterman and Andy Hunter

Snow. In late November, when most people in the northeast are buckling down and bracing themselves for the winter, we cross country skiers are doing everything we possibly can to get an early dose of the white stuff. During the last few weeks of dryland training, snow can seem more important than life itself. At least that's the way it is here in New England. In some places, snow, even lots of it, in November isn't even anything to sneeze at. In fact, the locals around Silver Star Mountain Resort in eastern British Columbia were even disappointed with the foot and a half of snow that they had by this November twenty first. Apparently, they usually have about three times that much.

We weren't about to complain, though. The ten junior skiers who made up the Maine half of the first Maine/British Columbia Nordic Skiers Exchange, were out west along with ten British Columbian junior skiers, and Scott Loomis and Marcus Nash of the US National Team for some early season training away from the bare ground of Maine. The trip was sponsored by Auto Europe, a division of Travel Services International, which is based out of Portland, Maine. They were absolutely invaluable to the success of our trip. John and Annie Upton also did a commendable job as our team coordinators, and were all-around good people to be with on our trip.

At Silver Star, we and the British Columbian skiers participated as a group in the Excel/Peltonen Ski Camps run there annually by Marty Hall. We arrived at the mountain late in the afternoon on Saturday the twenty-first tired from travel, but we were so excited by the sight of snow that we went for a short ski anyway, under the lights, before eating dinner and meeting our coaches. Even though our first ski was short, and the high altitude hit us like a ton of bricks, it was satisfying for the moment, for we had a long fun week of skiing to look forward to. We were coached for the whole week by Darren Derochie and Brent Bottomley, both of whom have a lot of experience skiing and coaching at the international level. They each expressed a great love for Nordic skiing and made us all notice that anything can happen if you put your mind to it and "believe." They each had a lot to tell us about racing, training, and technique. It was very interesting to be coached by individuals completely removed from the New England school of thought, concerning technique and methods of training.

It seemed like an awful waste to do any running in a place as blessed with snow as Silver Star was, but I think we all grew to enjoy the morning runs that we took at seven o'clock each day, even with the snow. That running certainly didn't take away from any of the on-snow training that we did. Every day,

at about nine in the morning and again around 2:30 in the afternoon, we took to the snow for workouts of anywhere from about one to two hours. Our coaches really emphasized the importance of doing every workout on snow with the best technique possible, so we were videotaped nearly every time we skied, and we spent a great deal of time after each day looking at the videotapes and pinpointing the good and bad points in our technique.

Between workouts and video analysis sessions, we even had a little bit of time to socialize, explore the village, sit in hot tubs, or (ugh!) do homework. Also, since we were working out so much, eating was a key part of our schedule. Luckily, we were fed very well and in large quantities. Every evening, there was "stretching with June" (something you definitely didn't want to miss). After dinner, we usually met either for a talk about some aspect of skiing at the Canadian National Altitude Training Center, or for a session with our coaches about racing, goal setting, or mental training. Our coaches both believed firmly in the value of mental training to skiers, so we did a great deal of work on the mental as well as the physical aspect of the skiing we were doing. All of this culminated in a "race simulation" that we held just for the members of our group on Saturday, the last day of the camp. We spent Friday afternoon preparing for the race, the goal being to practice all that we had learned during the week as if the simulation was a real race.

One week in a perfect ski town will do a lot for anyone. Along with skiing we learned a lot; how to believe in yourself, how to get the most out of yourself, how to interact with others, and how to see how lucky we all are. From me, and everyone else, I must express great thanks to John and Anne Upton, the people of Auto Europe, Darren Derochie, Brent Bottomley, Marty Hall, and anyone else who helped make this trip possible.

In addition to Ethan Masterman and Andy Hunter, the following Maine public high school skiers participated in the Maine/BC Exchange: Eileen Carey, Justin Easter, Karen Frost, Megan Greenleaf, Ian Hubbard, Jon Riley, Anna Sprague and Cecily Upton.

IRONING: TOOLS, TEMPERATURE AND TECHNIQUE

by Steve Poulin, for Swix

Factors that influence proper wax absorption:

1. Proper iron.
2. Proper temperature setting.
3. Proper amount of time ironing.
4. Proper room temperature.
5. Proper ski base condition.

Common Mistakes

1. Most skiers use the wrong irons. All irons are not created equal. Avoid household irons: their thermostats can be damaged by wax vapors, resulting in uncontrolled temperatures and overheating of the ski base. A good iron made specifically for ski waxing has these features:

- double plated steel surface which ensures a consistent base temperature
- temperature control thermostat/10x per second, with a temperature chart that allows for exact setting
- better overall temperature control
- greater high/low variations between settings

2. Most skiers iron at too high a temperature. An iron that is too hot can destroy ski bases. Overheating a ski base can a) oxidize it; b) burn it; c) seal it; and/or d) weaken the resins used in construction of the ski (melting point of 305°F).

Facts:

- When an iron is touched to the base of the ski, the temperature of the iron can drop as much as 30°C (54°F) — and those are the "good" irons in the marketplace. The Swix iron drops approximately 6°C (11°F).
- A polyethylene ski base can melt at 284°F, suffering irreversible damage.
- Softer/warmer waxes have a lower melting point, and penetrate the ski base better because of the raw materials used in them.
- Excessive heat can impair the effectiveness and performance of all waxes, especially the 100% fluorocarbons.

3. Most skiers don't iron long enough for proper wax absorption. At recommended temperatures, it takes an average of 3-5 minutes to properly and uniformly heat a sintered polyethylene ski base.

Facts:

- Liquidation of wax on the base does not necessarily mean the base is absorbing the wax. The polyethylene must reach a specific temperature before it can accept wax. Depending on the temperature of the ski at the time of ironing, it could take

as long as 3 minutes of ironing before a ski is ready to begin absorbing wax.

- Move the iron from tip to tail in one continuous pass, then lift and start from the tip again. Repeat 4 to 7 times per ski. This process assures proper time spent on a ski, and less chance of overheating the base.

4. Most skiers don't realize that the temperature of the waxing room should be above 60°F. At lower room temperatures, the ski core and base temperatures drop, and there is less space between the polyethylene molecules for wax absorption. At room temperatures below 60°F, skiers often use excessive iron temperatures to warm their skis faster — and ruin their ski bases as a result.

5. Most skiers recognize that ski maintenance is a critical factor when applying ski wax — but they still don't take care of their skis as well as they should.

Facts:

- Old, dry, oxidized bases don't accept wax well, especially fluorocarbons.
- Bases that aren't properly treated lose their structure faster.
- A high percentage of the speed you gain from your race wax depends on the condition of your skis before you wax.

I have given hundreds of racing clinics and seminars around the country, and this topic remains the most interesting and eye-opening to audiences. It just doesn't make sense to invest hundreds of dollars in skis, boots, bindings, poles and waxes and try to get away with a twelve-dollar iron. So get a quality iron and use it properly, for greater benefits and better overall skiing enjoyment. Be smart and have a great ski season.

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AROUND NEW ENGLAND

VERMONT

Jane Banks, PO Box 246, Underhill Center, VT 05490, (802) 899-4246. Email: banks@together.net

56 Vermonters comprised the Green Mountain Express team for the classic Canadian Marathon February 13 and 14. The two day event spanned 158K of double tracked varied terrain through woods and fields, across rivers and lakes (frozen?), through backyards and cow pastures and along dirt(y) roads. The course was divided into 10 unequal sections, of which one could ski 1 to 5 different sections each day. Major feed stations were at the end of each section, offering hot and cold drinks, soup, and a variety of munchies to fortify skiers for the next leg.

Evening lodging could be had at the interesting four story log hotel, Chateau Montebello, or in less interesting classrooms at the Papineau school where a water main break curtailed post-race showers. Enthusiasm ran high and was buoyed by the good-natured volunteers, as well as predominant bright sunshine. Those who wanted the extreme challenge skied the Coureur des Bois, the same course carrying a 50 pound pack with camping gear for sleeping out Saturday night!

The Masters World Cup hosted at Grindelwald, Switzerland will see several Vermonters compete. Among them are Dave Boucher, John Brodhead, Lennie Almo, Bob Gray, Dylan Nurmegh, Jane and Murray Banks.

Vermont's outstanding international racers include Tessa Benoit at Ramseau, Austria for World Cup; Colin Rogers, Margaret Maher, and Brayton Osgood in Sweden as members of the US Junior Development Team; Ilke Van Genechten at World Juniors Biathlon; and Ethan Foster, Justin Beckwith and Hillary Patzer (from New York and Idaho respectively, attending Middlebury College) at World Juniors.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

We've had a busy January and February in New Hampshire. In school racing, this year we had two qualifiers with race fields of over FIVE HUNDRED for the NH J2 and Eastern High School Championships teams. Thanks to Kennett High and Whittaker Woods in Conway and to White Mountain Regional High in Whitefield for the work they did to put on these big races. Race fields of this size are truly astounding and these race organizers managed to do the job — and the kids raced hard and had fun, too!

The UNH Carnival was held at Jackson, NH, a town that certainly knows how to put on races. And once again the Silver Fox Trot — in honor of Al Merrill, Dartmouth ski coach and Outdoor Program head for many years — came off despite the weather. It was moved from Oak Hill to Hanover's Garipay field (the "new golf course") and more than 400 racers showed up for a great day of racing on fast granular snow under sunny skies. John Morton and Jay Davis laid out the five kilometer course the day before, and several Massachusetts skiers were heard exclaiming "This is the hilliest golf course we've ever skied on!" There was even a guest class for two racers from Patagonia who were looking for fun cross country races in New England (in late January they raced Bob Haydock's VOMax/Bogburn, in the pouring rain — which hopefully was fun, too). The next day the NH Division 1 high school cross country ski championships were held on the same course, again under bright sun.

Farther into February is the Dartmouth Carnival in Hanover and then on the last weekend of the month the New England J2 Carnival will be held at Holderness School in Plymouth. The Jackson Jaunt, a club series race, is scheduled for March 7 in Jackson. And the Eastern High

School Championships will be held at Bretton Woods, with the spectacular backdrop of Mount Washington, on March 13-14. It's been a great season of racing in New Hampshire!

MAINE

The Titcomb Snow Hawks

by Dorcas Wonsavage, for the Sun Journal

In a cabinet of awards and memorabilia from ski days of yore, a cabinet that stands in a dark corner of the Lodge, is a framed and yellowed photograph. In the 1937 photo, Coach Titcomb and a group of his skiers have gathered for a team photo after a race in Canada. Written in faded ink below is "The Titcomb Snow Hawks." Almost sixty years later, the Farmington Ski Club has organized a junior development program for both alpine and nordic skiers in grades K through 8. Searching for a name, the Club decided to tip lycra hats to tradition, and the Titcomb Snow Hawks have been reborn.

The development program begins with a Bill Koch Youth Ski League club. The BKYSL is a USSA program that encourages participation in cross country skiing for ages K through 14. Buzz Davis leads the club of 25 kids, an incredible level of participation for a first year program. He is supported by many of the parents on their Thursday afternoon gatherings.

The middle school alpine program, which began last year, has expanded. Program Director Nate Yeaton oversees 29 athletes in grades 5-8 with the help of coaches Nate Jenks and Will Beck, all three of whom earned their coaching certifications through the UMF Ski Industries program. Yeaton is also the coach of his MARA-focused program, training skiers who are interested in competing at the regional level.

The middle school cross country program is new this year. Coach Dorcas Wonsavage and assistant coach Jim Hines have been leading dryland workouts since November 16th. Already 27 athletes are skiing with the program. Skiers and racers alike are welcome to train with the Team; but skiers need not race. The goal of the program is to make cross country skiing fun, and to introduce and improve technique.

There is a flexibility in these programs that is possible only because they are supported by the Club. These programs are open to any skier who would like to join the Farmington Ski Club. Already some skiers are coming all the way from Waterville! And athletes who are interested in skiing both alpine and nordic are able to alternate training days with the alpine and the nordic team. This year eight skiers are training to race for the Skimeister Award at the State Meet. Parental support, in car-pooling to races and BKL Festivals, in volunteering at races and helping out at practices, is an important contribution to the success of the programs.

The State Meet for our division will be co-hosted by Black Mountain and Titcomb. February 10th, Black Mountain will host the slalom and freestyle races; February 13th Titcomb Mountain will host the giant slalom and classic races, and the end of the season party! With their season almost over, the girl and boy Snow Hawks have either placed first or second in all their races! Regardless of results, the success of this first year program will be the cause for true celebration.

MASSACHUSETTS

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It seems that another item on the upcoming Y2K shortage list could be snow; you know, the good, skiable, track-settable fluffy stuff. As of late January, MA skiers are practicing on icy surfaces but are turning

SKI-ARCHERY

up all over New England with some great results.

Senior Nationals in Rumford was a big event this month, with many college teams participating. According to their ages, athletes competed for World Jr. spots or enjoyed the topnotch competition to get ready for the carnival circuit. Matt Whitcomb and Will Rawstron, both at Middlebury, had some strong races following US Ski team member Pat Weaver, of Lenox. Weaver won the event's final race, a grueling 50K classic event. Spencer Newell and Holly Dodge came with the St. Lawrence team, and Gretta Fachetti and Marissa Fitzpatrick skied as UNH Wildcats. Lindsey Molyneux and Kate Whitcomb, both at Stratton Mountain School, enjoyed the competition as did Carina Hamel, a J-2 who skied in the 5K classic and 10K skate events. Angus McCusker skied well in preparation for the upcoming Deaf Olympics.

Geoff Atkinson, a J1 from Norwood, had a great week, placing in the top 20 for Jrs overall. He earned an automatic berth on the JO team, and a spot on the J1 Europa Cup team. This special team headed to Sweden for 2 weeks to compete in 4 races against other top juniors.

Reports from the high school leagues sound like the post office motto: "Neither rain nor sleet nor gloom of klister will keep us from our appointed schedule..." Many races have taken place with some form of precipitation to challenge skiers, planners, waxers, and spectators alike. In Eastern Mass, Magali Sutton (Concord-Carlisle) has dominated the girls' races, with Emma Erickson (Wellesley), Michelle Jimmeron, and Christine Edwards (Dover-Sherborn) following closely. Matt Nalesnik (Wellesley H.S.) is leading the boys, chased by David Smutok (Wayland), Chris Testa (Dover-Sherborn), Matt Gordon (Wayland), Aaron Bloom (Lincoln-Sudbury), Peter Leonard (Wayland) and Peter Sokol-Hessner (Brookline).

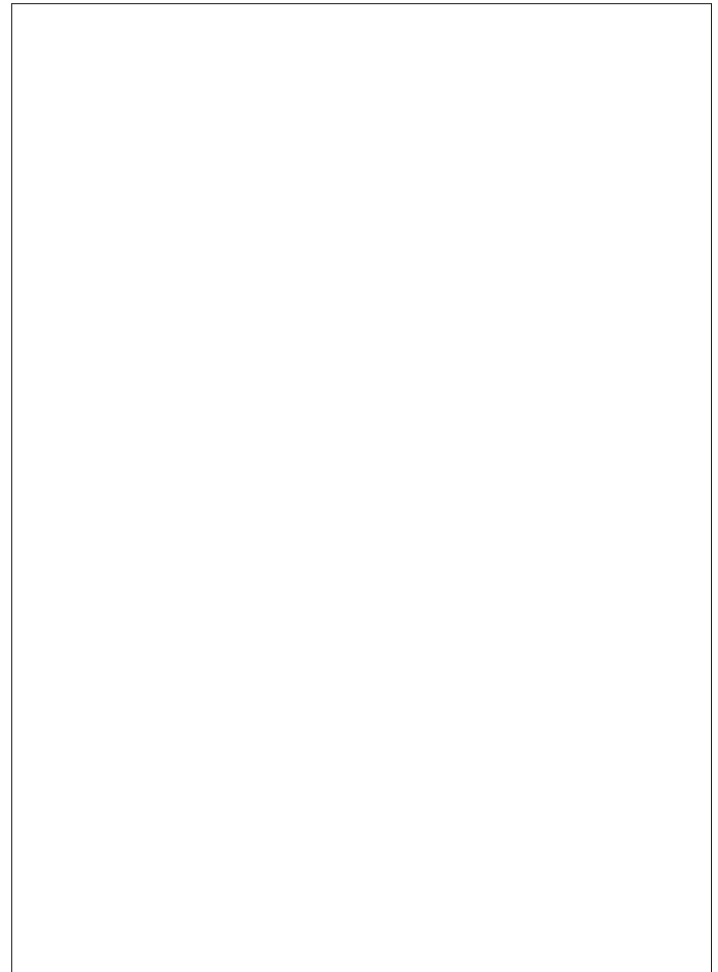
Western Mass. girls are led by Amber Dodge (Gateway), with Kate Dempsey (Wahconah), Hannah Blazejewski (Hoosac) and Kate Crawford (Mohawk) close behind. Wahconah skier Tom Keefe leads the league with strong competition from Angus McCusker (Mohawk), Jake Whitcomb (Wahconah), Adam Kincaid (Lenox), Joe Miller (Lenox) and Mike Payne (Gateway). Lenox boys are leading the team standings this season, as are the Lenox girls. The State Championships will be held on Feb 10th at Hickory Hill in Worthington.

Bill Koch racers from the Brodie, Lenox, and Berkshire Trails clubs have held their first two races of the season. On Jan. 9 about 25 young skiers and their families enjoyed the first race, held at Prospect Mtn. under sunny skies and in new snow. The second race was held at Hickory Hill on Jan. 17 with a good turnout and fun courses planned. There is nothing like a field of lollipoppers to bring a smile to your face (and an occasional tear), as they slide, glide, grip, and trip on their long path to Sr. Nationals.

BERGART IS NATIONAL CHAMPION

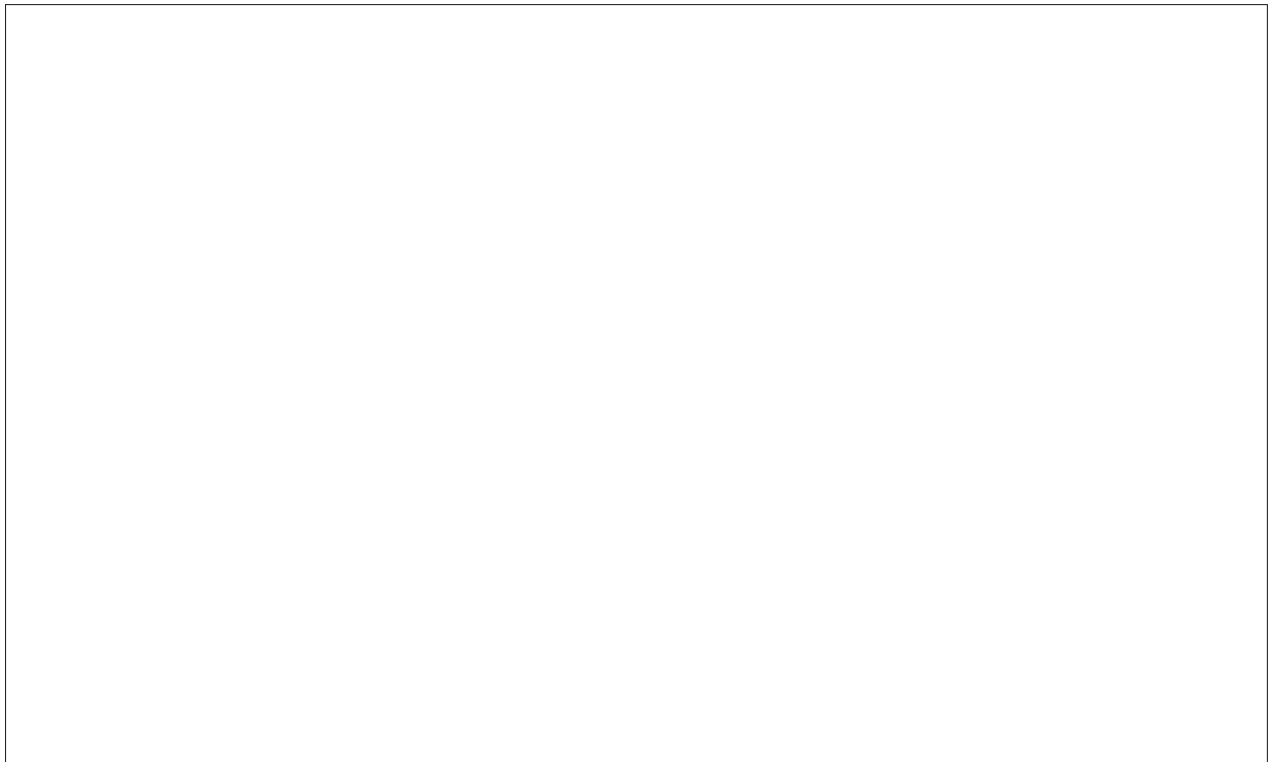
In a dramatic finish, 19 year old David Bergart of Acton, MA [coached in high school by Bob Fitzpatrick! — Ed.] caught Dan Norris of Evanston, Wyoming to win the 1999 US National Ski-Archery Championships at Sugarloaf, Maine on the last weekend of January. Both members of the 1998 National team, Dan had the early lead. At the final shooting stage, David needed to do well to have a chance. He hit three out of his four final targets, and skied his one required penalty loop in record time. David sprinted to the finish line and just overtook Dan in a time of 43:02. Keith Woodward (VT) and Mark Cornelius (WI) came in third and fourth.

A sophomore at Bates College, David is a three-time Junior National



Champion. Last year he represented the United States in Cogne, Italy, where he was the fastest American man, finishing eleventh in the world on the extremely difficult Italian course.

After the Nationals, based on 1998/99 point totals, National Coach Ed Eliason named Bergart, Norris, Sam Thornhill (WY) and Christoph Schork (WY), along with Stacy Jaquith (CA), Leslie Howa (UT), Sue Crouch (WI) and Lisa Vsetecka (CO) to the 1999 US National Team. They will be sent to Bessans, France this March for the second World Ski-Archery Championships. Next year the team hopes to compete in Japan. Then, in 2001, the US will host the third World Championships in Salt Lake City as a rehearsal for Ski-Archery's possible inclusion in the 2002 Olympics.



Women's mass start, Craftsbury EC/JOQ, January 9. Who was that with the fast wax?

Photo: Chuck Wooster

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