2012 ISSUE I
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE PSIA-AASI CENTRAL DIVISION

RIDING INTO SPRING

2012.13
ELECTION ISSUE
From the Editor

WOW! I want to share a recent experience that once again reminded me of why we do what we do. In the beginning of December, the Education Staff of Central Division converged on Boyne Highlands for an “all staff” training session. All disciplines were represented and it was a unique learning opportunity where the differences in what we slide on turned into the realization of the commonalities in how we slide. It was fun to watch the lines of separation between disciplines begin to blur as the common threads were discovered.

The greatest thread is the passion that all of us share! As I joined different groups throughout the weekend, both during Staff training and the event that followed, the eyes of every educator told me one thing, “I love what I do!” Our members share this passion as well. Each discipline continues to strive to reach a higher level of performance and understanding, and with that, they add more depth to the pool of knowledge for us all. We truly have an Education Staff that is committed to provide our members with the highest quality of educational experiences. I hope that you will take away the “WOW Factor” from your next event! Enjoy the rest of your season!

THERE IS STILL TIME FOR SOME LATE SEASON “WOW FACTOR”! SIGN UP BEFORE TIME RUNS OUT!
Who would have thought at the start of this season that we would be seeing temperatures in the 50s in January and February? We’ve had some unusual and challenging weather so far to say the least. Fortunately for all of us over the years, Central’s ski areas have become experts at making snow and keeping it under adverse conditions too. I’ve had the opportunity to travel around the Division, and I’ve been surprised by how good the skiing has been, in spite of the weather. Big high fives to all of the snowmaking and grooming crews that have worked harder than ever to make that possible.

I’m always amazed at what we are willing to endure in order to ski or ride. As I mentioned in a previous article, I can’t wait for the first day of skiing every year. This year’s opening day came a week later than usual. There was one strip of snow and it rained hard the whole time, but the skiing was great! I told my friends that we had to go, even if it was raining, because it was the first day. My Patagonia Torrent shell kept me warm and dry the whole time. There were many other hardy souls out there that day just trying to get their first runs of the season in after a seven-month layoff.

It’s easy to feel down during times like these, so it’s important that we help each other stay up. It’s also important that we assist our ski areas to get the word out that the skiing and riding are good despite the lack of natural snow. One of our industry’s biggest hurdles is to convince the public to come out to their local ski areas and resorts when they look out of their windows and only see grass and dirt. So stay positive and upbeat and try to have twice as much fun during the second half of the season!

I had two experiences so far this winter that have made me realize that we all belong to a fantastic association. The first experience was the joint fall training at Boyne Highlands this past December. It was an amazing opportunity for the Ed Staff from all of the disciplines to train together. We all came away from that weekend with a feeling of being part of one team rather than four separate ones. Training events like these create more consistent messages and images that will benefit the membership in the end.

The other experience that I was honored to be part of was the association meeting held in Lakewood, Colorado the last weekend in January. Thirty-four people from around the nation came together to discuss the future of our association. This group included the presidents from the nine divisions, the executive directors from the divisions, and the National Board and key personnel from our National office. The last time a group like this got together was in 2007. It’s important that meetings like this be held periodically because of the turnover in the various positions and the rapidly changing needs of the membership. See John Peppler’s article in this issue for a more in-depth description of the two-day meeting.

I returned from the Denver meeting with a renewed sense that our association is strong and moving in the right direction. We have some challenges, but I believe we have the right people in the right places to move us forward. The nine presidents and National’s chairman of the board will be working together to develop an Affiliation Agreement that will define and formalize the nine Divisions’ relationships with the National office. It will also outline how the Divisions interact with each other. I will keep you updated as things progress.

Please note that this is our election issue. Many sections have more than one person running, so it’s very important that you get involved and vote. There is no better way to affect the course of our Division than to vote for the person that you feel best represents your beliefs. Your vote will let the board know what they are doing right and where there is need for change. Please take the time to send in your ballot. It does make a difference!

Be safe and enjoy the rest of what winter has in store for us. We all love spring skiing and riding - this season may just give us a chance to enjoy a little more of it. As always, I want to thank you, the member, for making our organization what it is today.
One of our challenges in snowsports instruction is encouraging students to create turn shape for speed control. Through training, we learn tasks and exercises to encourage a rounded turn shape. Our results are mixed based on what the student envisions turn shape to be.

While watching race footage, I noticed the blue lines marking the course and had an idea. What if students had a visual target on the snow? Would this dial them in on proper turn shape? The answer to this question is…YES.

After about 15 minutes online, I had my dye recipe and off I went. My next stops were the hardware store and bakery supply store. To dispense the dye, I chose a garden sprayer. I found that duct tape was needed to cover the “Round-Up” name on the bottle. I also needed a piece of rope or parachute cord of about 20 meters, marking it off at 2 meter sections. The ladies at the cake shop seemed surprised when I cleaned them out of Royal Blue frosting dye. They were very helpful telling me to be sure to use water hot enough for the dye to fully blend. Once you fasten the cording to the dye filled sprayer, what you will have is a 20 meter compass for marking your lines.

Marking your course is quickest by having two people. Be sure you can be seen from above and your students can merge with traffic safely. Person one walks/skis down the fall line to predetermined turn radius. Person two must keep the cord taut and make a nice rounded target for student to use as a guide. These steps are repeated alternating sides down the hill. The student now has a turn target and we have an excellent visual tool to use.

When the students focus on the line, their eyes keep moving down the hill and it gives us a method to show what we want at each phase of the turn. This technique works at all levels of lessons and coaching. The lines can be functional for all disciplines of snowsports. Although, I am told by our snowboarding staff that they need a bit larger turn radius. A few examples of tasks to develop turns using this tool:

**WHOLE TURN**  
- Have students follow the line while stepping.  
- Gliding through the course doing shuffles or bouncers.

**INITIATION**  
- Instruct students to flatten feet and guide to next line.  
- Patience turns, little toe initiation.  
- Feet outside of line, hips crossing inside the new line.

**SHAPING**  
- Keep guiding, slowly rolling feet to big and little toe side.  
- Feet outside, hip inside of the line.  
- Work on duration, intensity, rhythm, timing (DIRT)

**FINISH**  
- Both feet on strong platform back to initiation.  
- Duration and intensity lightening up for transition to the next initiation.

Now, this is where you can add your own special style. Use the lines and start applying your own bag of tricks. You will need to experiment with turn size and spacing relative to your terrain and conditions. Add this to your bag of tricks and get your students in better shape.

A few websites you might find helpful for ordering dye or directions of use:

- www.skiracing.org.nz/content/library/RaceCourseDyePresentation.pdf  
- www.reableracing.com/detail.cfm?edp=10975670

RON KLEMENT, PSIA LEVEL III, IS THE SKI SCHOOL DIRECTOR & TRAINER FOR SNOWSTAR SKI SCHOOL.
SUSAN BOYLE
I was hired at Spirit Mountain and that first instructor job gave me access to the first ski lessons in my life.

Currently, I am a Level II Alpine instructor at Hyland Snowsports Academy in Bloomington, Minnesota. At Hyland Hills, I taught for years before mustering the courage to take Level I, but have sought more understanding and experience ever since. Once certified, I took advantage of PSIA training events, learning so much each time that I found myself delving further into technical information i.e. how understanding body mechanics and ski technology can make more effective skiers.

By nature and profession as a teacher, my current role is running our Women’s program, which allows me to see what is (and is NOT) effective teaching. It is gratifying to return from a PSIA event, put new ideas into practice, and test the efficacy of new drills and concepts in relation to the level of my students. As a trainer for our PSIA candidates, I supply information, support and practice, urging each candidate to reach for further certification, and to become better instructors.

In a Board position, I will support the current drive for high standards in our Central organization, and work to ensure the benefits of education events without raising costs to a level prohibitive to the very people who need them - our members. I would like to recruit more instructors to PSIA by showing them that certification is an attainable goal benefiting them professionally and in their personal skiing. I would appreciate your support.

LUKE WILLIAMS
My name is Luke Williams from PSIA-AASI Central, Section 1. I am Alpine Level 2 certified since 2003 and currently work fulltime at the Elm Creek Winter Recreation Area in Maple Grove, Minnesota as the SnowSports School Director for 6 years. I have worked in the ski and snowboard industry for 14 years, starting as an instructor and program supervisor at the Hyland Ski/Snowboard Area in Bloomington, MN. I look forward to representing the members to the BOD, working on common issues and helping strengthen the organization.

DAVID CLEVELAND
Biography not available.

JOHN KEATING
I am writing to ask for your support in the upcoming BOD election for Section 2. I have spent the past four years representing you on the Board of Directors. While we have accomplished a lot during the past four years, there is still unfinished business. I would like to have the opportunity to build on what we have accomplished so far.

Three of those years have been as the Education VP. This has provided me with the opportunity to build a good working relationship with all four discipline administrators.

I am currently on a PSIA-AASI national committee for the Strategic Education Plan – SEP. If re-elected I will be able to continue this valuable work.

Because of my diversified background during the past 25 years in the ski industry, I think you will see that I have the experience to represent you. This depth of knowledge will help me to make decisions based on good judgment and insight.

- PSIA-C Member – Level III
- PSIA-C Alpine Education Staff Member (Examiner)
- Marquette Mountain Ski School Director
- Marquette Mountain Ski Instructor
- NSP-C Member
- Marquette Mountain Co-Ski Patrol Director
- Marquette Mountain NSP Ski & Toboggan Trainer
- NSP-C Division Ski & Toboggan Trainer
- NSP-C Certified Program Advisor
- NSP Certified Staff Member #425
- NSP National Appointment #8024
- NSP-C Ski School Director

I hope that I can count on your support in the upcoming BOD election. Respectfully Submitted,
John Keating
LYNN DINNING
For over 35 years, I have been a full-time snowports instructor, holding Alpine Level 3 certification, as well as Nordic Level 1, Telemark Level 1, and USSCA Level 100 certifications (yes, I also snowboard a bit). Nubs Nob is my home resort of 30 years, where I am an instructor, staff trainer, supervisor, and former ski school director. I have also worked at Boyne USA and at Aspen/Snowmass schools.

With many years observing changes in the winter sports industry, economy, society, and environment, I would listen intently to the views/concerns of this region’s members and bring this information to the table as your representative on the Board of Directors.

Lynn Dinning
lyndinning@gmail.com

BILL STANLEY
My name is Bill Stanley, I live in Traverse City, Michigan, and I am an Alpine Level III certified instructor and an Examiner on the PSIA-AASI Central Alpine Education Staff. I am an active member of the Snow Sports Staff at Boyne Highlands Resort in Harbor Springs, Michigan. I am seeking reelection to the PSIA-AASI Central Board of Directors as one of your Representatives from Section 4.

As an active instructor and member of the Education Staff, I have frequent opportunities to speak with members across our division. These discussions continue to give me a good sense of what the membership is looking for from our organization. As a current member and President of the Central Division Board, I have worked hard to maximize the value of your membership dollars by ensuring fiscal responsibility and addressing the changing needs of our membership in a timely manner. I have led the effort to rewrite our Division’s Bylaws to bring them in line with current practices and to make them easier to understand and more user friendly for our membership.

I believe that our Division is one of the best Divisions in the nation and I would like to continue to be part of the efforts to ensure that is always the case. I would appreciate your vote to reelect me to represent you as a Section 4 Representative on the Central Division Board of Directors so that I may continue the work done on your behalf over the last 4 years.

JIM JOHNSON
Hello, I am Jim Johnson. I am the current Section 5 PSIA-AASI Central Board member and I need your support to retain this seat. I commit to you that your voice will be heard at every Board meeting, to which I have a perfect attendance record. I am PSIA level 3, AASI level 1, Trainer Accredited and Children’s Specialist Trainer. I am also Co-Owner/Director of Gold Merit Blizzard Ski and Snowboard School. I have the experience, skills and interests to best represent you on the PSIA-AASI Central Board.

I have spent seven non-consecutive years serving you on the PSIA/AASI-Central board. Some proud accomplishments in serving you include as your representative on committees:
- Bylaw revisions.
- Chairing technology committee in creating new web presence.
- Establishing PSIA-AASI Central recognition for Snowsports Schools as members.
- Implementing student rates and requirements.
- The education credit waived for members who have obtained a certification of Level II with 40 years of continued membership, or has obtained Level III with 30 consecutive years of membership.
- Armed Services membership waiver.
- Online fill in documents.

With your support, I will continue to represent your views for positive change in the Central Division. I will do this swiftly, efficiently and in line with your input. I request your reelection vote to our great Organization.
Please contact me with your questions, concerns and thoughts. I will value them greater than my own. Together we can pave a successful path for our organization.

Sincerely,
Jim Johnson
(248) 496-6000
j2ii@ameritech.net

LOUIS PORTER

Within the last several years the Board has endeavored to foster greater transparency, improve education content and consistency, make event information easier to access, improve communications to members and enhance the resources that are available to members. I want to continue those trends. Further consolidation of these improvements and closer coordination between portfolios, course content and examinations can and should be achieved. In addition I want to make education of our members through means outside of paid education events a higher priority of the Central Division. Greater use of web based educational tools clearly tied into the portfolio curriculum would not only make it less expensive for our members but easier and more convenient for our members to learn and master and later review critical information. Fostering the greater sharing of dryland educational materials from ski school to ski school, and developing solid on-line educational resources would enhance the value PSIA-C gives its members with relatively little in costs. Our members are professional and they want to continue to learn and are passionate about our sport. We desperately need to fulfill their needs. Our members deserve that.

My views on these issues have been informed by my experience as a staff trainer at Mt. Brighton in both on hill and dryland clinics.

My skiing experience began over 59 years ago. I have worked at Mt. Brighton since 1987 and I am certified at Alpine Level 3, a Childrens Specialist 2, and am Alpine Trainer Accredited.

GEOFFREY SHEPHERD

Current Biographical Information:
• Timber Ridge Snow Sports School Director, Gobles, MI
• 2009 – Present: PSIA-AASI Central Snowsports School Director Chairperson
• Level 3 Certified

Relevant PSIA History & Experience:
• 1965: Began Snow Sports career
• 1969 - Present: Employed by Timber Ridge where I have served in various capacities and departments:
  • Lift Department Manager
  • Food and Beverage Manager
  • Maintenance
  • Snow Sports School Supervisor and Instructor
  • National Ski Patrol background and experience:
    • Senior Certification
    • Regional Testing and Training Position
    • Inactive/Alumni Member
• 1993: Joined PSIA
• 1994: Level 1 Certified
• 1995: Level 2 Certified
• 2000: Level 3 Certified
• 2001 through present time: Timber Ridge Snow Sports School Director
• 2008: Elected to PSIA-AASI Central Board

I would appreciate the opportunity to once again serve as an elected member of your PSIA-AASI Central Board. Your vote and your support are most welcome and appreciated. As a member of your Board I will work very conscientiously to serve you, the PSIA-AASI Central members, our customers and students.

Many of the challenges in our industry are a reflection of the changes the state, country and economy are facing. Along with the rest of the Board I will work to keep our organization vibrant, current, relevant and exciting. You can be confident that I will seek out your viewpoints and address your concerns.

I thank you for your consideration and your vote.
ALPINE SECTION 6 NOMINEES

My name is Scott King and I work out of the Boston Mills/Brandywine ski hills in Ohio and will be running for a Board position for Alpine Section 6 in the upcoming election. My skiing career began many moons ago (38 years) in a small Northern Ontario town where we regularly skied at sub-zero temps and had a ball. I joined numerous racing programs as well as became a member of the Northern Ontario Freestyle team in the 80’s (dating myself). Shortly afterwards, I got involved with the ski patrol as well as ski school and spent time as a ski patrol leader, ski instructor and Director. It was then that I decided my passion was in teaching and decided to concentrate my efforts there.

It has been 29 years now that I have been teaching and the last 8 have been in Ohio. I am the Alpine Training Director at BMBW and am Level3 CSIA as well as Level3 PSIA certified. I was also fortunate enough to join the PSIA-AASI Central Education Staff a couple of years ago and am now able to pass along my passion and knowledge to a broader audience. I see many opportunities for my experience to help elevate the division even higher than it already is and represent the membership. My focus is and always has been the end product we, as an organization provides to the public. I would appreciate any and all support I am fortunate enough to gain from the membership.

MARILYN YONEK

Hello members, I am Marilyn Yonek, one of your Board members from Section 6. I have been your representative for the last two terms/four years. During that time, we the Board have made great strides forward, including the Portfolio. It is such a great tool for learning and tracking your growth as an instructor.

I am a Level III Alpine certified instructor and have Children’s accreditation and trainer’s accreditation. For the past 20 years, I have served as a trainer for the Boston Mills Brandywine staff, as well as a patroller for a few years. I lead clinics for our instructors, and I am actively teaching in our children’s programs and ladies program, called Women’s Discovery. I would like to continue the work we have started, to make this a better organization for you the member. Thank you for your consideration.

YOUR “PROXY” COUNTS AS YOUR VOTE

By Doug Carter, Financial Vice President and Section 3 Board Representative, PSIA-AASI Central

You may notice a few changes in the election process for this year’s Board of Directors. Effective for the first time during this election cycle, we have converted our organization’s formal structure into what is called a “membership-based” corporation. For the most part, the procedural changes you may notice relate to this change.

As a membership-based organization, the Central Division will convene an annual meeting of its membership for the purpose of electing directors. This year’s annual meeting commences at 5:00 p.m. ET on March 31, 2012, and will be held in our corporate office at 3225 West St. Joseph, Lansing, Michigan.

Although you are free to attend our annual meeting and vote in person, the manner in which most people vote at such meetings (especially when the membership is spread among several states) is by submitting a “proxy.” The ballot we are using in this year’s election cycle (see pages 9-10 in this issue of The Central Line) therefore contains the word “proxy.”

By submitting this ballot (or technically, this “proxy”) in advance of the annual meeting, you are instructing the Division’s Executive Director to cast your vote for the candidate of your choice at the annual meeting. The Executive Director will follow your instructions. Your proxy therefore counts as your vote. But remember – your proxy must be received in the corporate office no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on March 31, 2012.

You may also notice that the proxy form we are using only references contested races. When only one person has been nominated for an open board seat, the person nominated automatically will fill the open seat. No additional voting is required.

Contested board seats often are filled by a margin of less than five votes. Your vote counts! Vote!!!!
PSIA-AASI CENTRAL DIVISION
VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

Use the following form to cast your vote in the 2012 election for your Board of Directors!

Instructions:

1. In the area on the following page for voting, find the race that pertains to your geographic SECTION within the Central Division (see map on the voting form for geographic boundaries) and to the snowsports discipline in which you are certified as a snowsports instructor. (If your SECTION or discipline is not listed, no Board representative is being selected in this election cycle through a vote of the membership.)

2. Place a check mark by the candidate of your choice.

3. Fill in the voting form with your name, signature, member number, SECTION and the snowsports discipline in which you are certified. (If you are certified in more than one discipline, you should indicate each discipline in which you are certified.)

4. **Make sure your completed voting form is received in our business office, by fax, e-mail or snail mail, no later than 5:00 P.M. ET, March 31, 2012.** (Addresses and fax number are listed on the voting form. If you wish to vote by e-mail, you must scan the completed voting form and attach it to the e-mail.)

Active Certified Level I, II, III and Lifetime Honorary members in good standing are eligible to vote.

Each voting member may cast only one vote in the appropriate race pertaining to the snowsports discipline in which the member is certified. Members who are certified in more than one discipline may vote for one candidate with respect to each discipline in which the member holds the required certification. Write-in candidacies are not allowed. Vote only for candidates who are listed on the voting form.

With respect to elections for the Alpine and Snowboard members of the Board, a member may vote only in a race that pertains to the member’s SECTION. A member SECTION shall be the SECTION where the member has her or his legal residence. However, certified members who are in good standing with the Central Division but who live outside the geographical boundaries of the Central Division, and who are actively teaching within the Central Division, may vote for a SECTION Representative in the SECTION in which they are actively teaching.

Members who wish for her or his vote to remain secret may submit this voting form completed in all respects except that in lieu of indicating the member’s vote on the face of the form, the member shall state that specific voting instructions are attached. The member must then affix to the voting form a sealed envelope containing clearly written voting instructions.

**VOTE!**

GET INVOLVED. REMEMBER YOU **CAN** MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
Alpine SECTION 1 Nominees:
- Susan Boyle
- Luke Williams

Alpine SECTION 2 Nominees:
- David Cleveland
- John Keating

Alpine SECTION 4 Nominees:
- Lynn Dinning
- Bill Stanley

Alpine SECTION 5 Nominees:
- Jim Johnson
- Louis Porter
- Geoffrey Shepherd

Alpine SECTION 6 Nominees:
- Scott King
- Marilyn Yonek

I am a current member of PSIA-AASI Central Division in good standing. I am certified in the snowsports discipline(s) that are indicated below (or I am a Lifetime Honorary Member). I hereby grant a limited proxy to the Executive Director of PSIA-AASI Central Division to appear on my behalf at the 2012 Annual Meeting of PSIA-AASI Central Division and to cast my vote in accordance with the instructions that are set forth in this election form.

Print your name

Sign your name

Membership number

Your Discipline(s):  □ Alpine  □ Snowboard  □ Nordic  □ Adaptive

Your SECTION:  1  2  3  4  5  6
Every three or four years PSIA-AASI leaders from across the country meet to discuss the future direction of your organization and to chart how to best provide the services for our members and recommit ourselves to our mission. From an educational standpoint, these meetings are necessary because as time passes Divisional and National leaders are placed in positions that are new to them. As we all want to be rowing the boat in the same direction, the Divisional and National business models need to be examined and new directions need to be charted.

In order to align the Divisions and National towards similar goals and objectives, on January 29 and 30, 2012, 34 PSIA-AASI leaders and office staff from across the country met in Lakewood, Colorado, to discuss and make plans for the future of our organization. This group consisted of: Division Presidents, Division Executives, National Staff and the PSIA-AASI National Board of Directors. The theme of the meeting was:

EXPLORING OUR STRENGTHS AND FUTURE SUCCESS

The larger group was broken down to three smaller groups that took time to discuss within each smaller group three areas of concern.

Strengthening organizational relationships: reviewing roles and responsibilities of the 9 Divisions and the role of National; how each entity communicates with one another; the expectations of each entity; the alignment of resources and examination of what resources are needed for day to day operations; and, the opportunity to reduce redundancies yet continue efficient daily operations both within divisions and the relationship expectations between the Divisions and National.

Examining association governance: explored background, history, and divisional terminology; perceptions of the current operation structure; representation in the governance model; and, components of an affiliation agreement that outlines baseline requirements, fundamental responsibilities and optional services.

Maximizing marketing and membership impact: sharing ideas for new membership recruitment and retention strategies; increase awareness among key audiences of PSIA-AASI members’ value to resorts; capitalizing on marketplace trends and dynamics; expanding the campaign to increase awareness of the value of certification; and, building awareness of the on-snow experience for future guests.

Each of the three smaller groups spent about an hour discussing one of these major topics, recording the discussions and then reporting those discussions to the attendees; and, as you can see each of these major discussion topics covered lots of territory. The task was definitely double black diamond with respect to the challenge!

After compiling the findings of the groups and establishing priorities for the group as a whole, it was agreed that an efficient and effective process currently exists to resolve strategic issues among the Divisions and National. But, more work needs to be done in areas of communication and understanding of who does what and when it is to be done. This is especially important between Divisions and between the Divisions and National.

To come to a consensus, the 9 Divisional Presidents and the PSIA-AASI National Chairman were given the task of outlining an Affiliation Agreement that will provide specifics regarding standards of practice within Divisions and what services National provides to the Divisions. The goal is that this outline (Affiliation Agreement) will more clearly define how we do business with each other and what we can rely on with respect to services provided to one another. Basically, fences make good neighbors.

This committee will be chaired by PSIA-AASI Central Division President Bill Stanley, PSIA-AASI President’s Council Chairman. This is a monumental task but all involved look forward to the challenge and a task all will actively participate in and work towards.
A SIMPLER TIME
(AND A SIMPLE FOCUS)

By Brad Miller

On my way to Swiss Valley this past November, I looked at the northbound lane of U.S. 131 just south of Grand Rapids and wondered aloud as I hid like a zebra in the southbound pack, “What a herd of metal and rubber.” Swiss Valley is located in the woods and farmlands of southwest Michigan and reminds me of the area where I cut my teeth, in a much simpler time. I’m not sure why our mom got us into a social sport like skiing. Maybe it was to show us proper etiquette. “Remember, pinky out when tipping over outhouses or cows.” Whatever Mom’s reason, when my siblings and I started skiing, we received a few lessons through our school. The first half hour lesson was the “art of getting up” taught by the director, Mark Rupert. “Rupe” demonstrated the task once and then had us work on this most important aspect of skiing for the next 29 minutes. Following the lesson, we were cut loose creating complete havoc on the ski racks or anything or anyone that had the misfortune to get in our way. During the next few weeks of lessons, I couldn’t help but notice that my siblings were slipping out of the class and heading up the tow rope (they already knew how to avoid ski racks). Yes indeed. A simpler time with simple focus points like ski racks, taught us well.

About halfway through last year’s race season, I listened as a young coach expounded on the importance of a simple thing—ankle flexion. I contemplated for a moment and came to the conclusion that my students probably would have much more fruitful lessons, if I started with the ankle as a focus point. It’s pretty easy to forget about our ankles when they are locked into ski boots. Ankle flex has been a fundamental part of skiing since the beginning of time, and maybe something we need to get back to. We have been programmed to think about our feet, knees and hips. The feet make tons of moves that put us in a balanced state. Just close your eyes and stand on one foot, and you will get the skinny on what your feet can do. When I’m moving really slow and my feet are warm, thinking about my feet can be a functional focus.

The knees can also work as a focal point. “Bend ze knees one quarter please.” The problem that occurs with knee focus is the fact that knees don’t bend too well while weighted, unless you flex your ankles and/or
drop your hips. Try it standing up in your street shoes. Knees do not angulate either. They are a one-way hinge joint. Many of us have the zipper scars that attest to the limitations of the knee joint.

“Hips to the Tips” is another focus point. However, to move the hips forward, the ankles have to flex forward then the knees bend. Hip angulation can also be interpreted as a way to move the hip to the inside of the turn. Without some curvature of the spine coupled with the proper amount of ankle flexion and knee bend, pure hip angulation equals tipping. Throwing the hip to the inside of the turn at the angle (edge) building phase takes much longer than rolling the ankle forward and to the inside.

Our ankles, on the other hand, are joints that articulate. They flex fore and aft and roll to the left and to the right. “Roll the Ankles” or “Flex the Ankles” are focus points that we can immediately feel inside the boot (see boot fit). To adequately feel “Shin Tongue,” we need to flex the ankle forward which allows the knees to bend. To “get to the inside edge,” we need to roll the ankles forward and left or right. This, along with the knees bending and the appropriate amount of spine curvature, allows our hips to move to the inside as speed and turn shape dictate.

Get in shape and stay there by keeping the ankles strong before and during the season. This can be accomplished in a bevy of ways and here are a few simple ones. Hiking up and across hills—the ankle has to work fore/aft and left/right. Using a jump rope not only strengthens your ankles, but develops foot speed. Stand on a step facing upstairs, placing the back half of each foot in thin air. Begin toe raisers up/down and up/down with left to right articulation. Pop the alpine bubble and try skate skiing, Telemarking and snowboarding. They all require more emphasis on the ankle. If you’re up to it, give ice skating a whirl (“Go Wings!”). Very simple things that you could do with your class to promote ankle flexion include side stepping up the hill, herringbone up the hill, and figure eight skate drills. Set up brush corridors and work on side slip to edge set drills. Use the corridors to work on falling leaf drills. If your class is advanced, work on these drills with one foot.

Boots Fit 101: We all want to tell each other that the boots we have are the best. However, keep in mind everyone is built differently. If your boots are too stiff or too big, you need to make a change not only in order to allow the ankles to flex properly, but to allow a proper amount transmission of energy. Transmission of energy, simply put, is when you flex your ankle. It pushes against your boot which transmits to the ski for a desired result. Well-fit boots can be like placing your hand in a well-fit boxing glove and striking the punching bag, (“Sting like a Bee!”) Boots that are too big are like trying the same thing with a five gallon bucket on your hand. If you can’t flex your boots in the shop, you have the wrong ones on. If you have boots that feel too stiff, you can check them by standing on a step and jumping off. If you can land softly without being bounced, you’re probably good to go. If an eight-inch landing is tough, make adjustments. Make sure you find a boot that fits your foot shape and make time to spend with a reputable boot fitter.

Just like skiing in a simpler time, simpler things, like focus on ankle flexion and facilitating it with proper flexing and fitting boots, can make skiing and teaching skiing much simpler, and above all, fun and enjoyable for both you and your student.

“Pinky out and flex those ankles!”

Ciao!

Grinding rails is a fun intermediate move for your terrain park students who are chomping at the bit to learn new freestyle hits. The basic grind is performed by mounting a rail and skidding with the skis tips and tails perpendicular to the direction of travel. Mastering a cool rail grind puts a freestyle skier right in there in the hierarchy of the top park rats in the terrain park. The basic rail grind serves as a platform for a host of more advanced moves such as the change up (Reference 1), and 360 off. Skills learned from riding boxes and jumping will help your student get a grip on riding rails. There is a degree of apprehension when a skier tries a rail for the first time and rightly so. Adjusting to the behavior of skis skidding on metal is foreign to the muscle memory of most of your students. In order to reduce apprehension and set up your class for success, the classic theory of stepping stone progressions is applicable.

THE GRIND
Figure 1 is a view of the basic grind in a sequential format. During the approach (the A in ATML - approach, take-off, maneuver, landing) the skier adjusts speed using a breaking wedge and lines up with the feature as if intending to straddle the rail (Figure 1A). Focus is on the end of the feature. Knees are flexed and feet about shoulder width apart. At the ramp, preparation for the take-off is made by rotating the upper body in the direction of rotation chosen by the skier. At take-off (the T in ATML) the skis are rotated sequentially (what will become the trailing ski rotates first), perpendicular to the direction of travel while the skier attains air (Figure 1B). It is not necessary, nor desirable, to get big air at take off. Just enough air is needed to mount the rail, as too much air results in a jarring landing which could cause difficulties in the maneuver phase. When contact is made with the rail, the origi-
nal body rotation is checked with upper body counter-rotation and a slight semi A-frame stance on the feature (Figure 1C). The skier grinds (M in ATML) on the ski surface under the boot. A slight “Daffy” is appropriate to grip narrow rails and prevent movement off the rail (Figure 1D). Near the end of the feature, the skier unweights, and the stored energy from the lower body twist aligns the skis with the direction of travel (Figure 1E), facilitating the landing (Figure 1F).

TECH TALK

Since the skis interact with a long piece of steel in a manner unlike riding on boxes, some technical aspects of equipment may influence the outcome of your class or coaching session:

Figure 2 shows a typical adjustable (for and aft) binding set-up for freestyle twin-tip skis. Bindings are set back for all mountain skiing. The bindings are set to an intermediate position for jumping and halfpipe freestyle moves and set forward for rail moves such as the rail grind, which is the subject matter of this article. Positioning boots over the center of the skis reduces the resistance to rotation (rotational inertia) of the skis, making it easier to mount a rail, and is the preferred binding location for rail hits. Many freestyle skiers also bevel the edges of their skis (Figure 3) just under the boot area. This tends to aid in grinding and reduces the chance of engaging an edge on the rail. Some skiers prefer a 6 degree bevel, some simply chamfer (round off) the edge to a preferred radius and others do nothing to the skis. It should be noted that there is no hard and fast rule as to what equipment to use and how it should be prepared. The equipment configurations in Figures 2 through 3 are guides to setting up equipment that may help your students achieve an awesome rail grind. As always, a ski helmet is highly recommended for rail moves.

POSITIONING

At the introduction of your class, a workout, without skis, on a small practice feature (References 2 & 3) is helpful. In Figure 4A, we see the semi A-frame stance where the lead leg is angulated slightly with the leading edge higher than the trailing edge of the lead foot. This reduces the chance of the lead edge engaging on the feature, as well as reduces the body rotation when the perpendicular position on the feature is achieved. Have your students run and jump (without skis) onto the rail into the position shown in Figure 4A. It should be noted that the jump should be minimal, just enough to lift the body onto a rail. The leading foot is more heavily weighted than the trailing foot. Figure 4B shows positioning on a rail with the leading edge of the leading ski raised. Center of mass should be between the feet with more weight toward the leading foot. Lateral location of the skier’s center of
mass should be right over the rail with the rail typically under the arch of the foot. The skier in Figure 4B is preparing to dismount and is counter-rotating the upper body. His hips are reasonably aligned with the feet, which aids in keeping the skis perpendicular to the rail. Many rail skiers also have the shoulders aligned with the feet, but the head is always looking at the end of the feature. Rotating the upper body, such that the hips face the end of the feature, often results in the skier falling off the rail as the skis attempt to realign with the upper body. The skier in Figure 4B may look like he is slightly back, but he does have weight on the leading ski. Remember that the photo is dynamic and that he is resisting the grind drag force on the front ski.

Figure 4C shows another common position used primarily when a spin is expected on the rail, but is also used for a grind by some skiers who can cancel body rotation using the upper body only. Left or right foot forward is a preference left up to the skier often based on a feeling of comfort. Many freestyle skiers prefer having their dominant leg forward, but either way is acceptable.

**PRACTICE RAIL**

Next, put on the skis and try the move on a small practice feature as shown in Figure 5. Have the student approach in line with the feature, looking at the end of the feature (Figure 5A). The take-off is achieved with a slight hop to free the skis from the snow and counter-rotation to place the skis perpendicular to the direction of travel (Figures 5B and 5C). Make sure the hop is slight, as it is preferable to pop up onto the rail rather than come down hard on the rail. Check for sequential rotation of skis with the trailing ski rotating first to avoid crossing the front ski over the rear ski when mounting the rail.

Observe the grind, making sure the student’s boots are over the rail (Figure 5D). For the landing, the student hops to unweight, and the lower body unwinds to align the skis with the feature (Figure 5E). Check for the boot positioned over the rail, the hips aligned with the feet and a slight hop for landing. The hips remain aligned with the feet throughout the sequence.
GRIND A SMALL WIDE RAIL

Now that you are satisfied with the skill demonstrated on the practice feature, it is time to move on to the next stepping stone, a small, relatively wide rail in the park. This will be the first time that your class will actually be using the ramp to get air and mount the rail. A combination of extension and lift from the ramp is appropriate to get on the rail. Figure 6 is an example of a student performing this task. Figure 6A shows adequate flexion in preparation for the take-off or pop. In Figure 6B, the skier could use a little more rotary preparation for the take-off, as evidenced in Figure 6C where the skier did not quite mount the rail with the skis perpendicular to the direction of travel. This is a crooked grind (skis not perpendicular to the direction of travel) which works on a wide rail, but can cause difficulties on narrow rails. Despite these deficiencies, the skier does grind the whole rail and lands with the skis aligned with the direction of travel. His hips are aligned with the feet and the head is focusing on the end of the rail.

There is a slight fear factor when launching onto a rail for the first time. Emphasize weight toward the leading foot, since leaning toward the rear can force the skis forward and cause a possible fall. Practicing over the ramp without mounting the rail gives a feeling of the lift expected from the lip, lessening the uncertainty when attempting to mount the rail. As always, the body should project forward slightly at the pop from the ramp to avoid landing back and having the skis slide out from under the skier. Remember to emphasize approaching at a nominal speed, since mounting at a slow speed may result in a stall or a roll off the rail.

GRIND A HIGHER NARROW RAIL

Finally, take the class to a typical narrow rail (2x6” tube) as shown in Figure 7. The skier approaches with sufficient flexion, feet apart and center of mass facing the end of the rail (Figure 7A) preparing for the pop at the lip. Upper body rotation is shown in Figure 7B prior to the lip. At the take-off, the twist energy is released, and the skis turn perpendicular to the direction of travel. The student has landed on the rail (Figure 7C) with upper
body counter-rotation to cancel the spin as well as a slight semi A-frame stance. It should be noted that the skis are in a slight “Daffy” position with the leading ski tip angled upward, while the trailing ski tip is angled downward. This helps steady the skier on narrow rails and reduces the chance of sliding off before the exit. Figures 7D through F show an appropriate grind and good landing. In Figure 8, the red arrows show the slight “Daffy” position with the leading tip up and the trailing ski tip down. This forms an inverted V (dotted green line) which tends to keep the skier on course, especially for long rails.

The gripping technique shown in Figure 8 can be practiced statically on a small feature before trying it on a larger feature. This gripping technique comes in handy on narrow rails.

**MOVEMENT ANALYSIS**

Figure 9 depicts typical difficulties experienced by beginning freestyle rail skiers that can be addressed by movement analysis and correction by the instructor or coach. In Figure 9A the skier has mounted the rail with insufficient ski rotation and is performing a crooked grind, which has caused him to slide off the feature. Review the exercises with counter-rotation statically and well as dynamically over the practice.

**FIGURE 7**

**FIGURE 8**

**FIGURE 9**
rail. Emphasize that the skis should be perpendicular to the rail. Make sure the student approaches with the center of mass facing the end of the rail. If alignment is off, an early, unintended departure from the rail is likely. In Figure 9B, the skier has achieved the perpendicular position of the skis but is sliding off the rail. This is typically a result of improper line up and not focusing on the end of the feature. Practice line up with the rail with center of mass (belly button) pointing toward the end of the rail. Speed may need to be increased if the skier is traveling slowly on the rail. Figure 9C shows insufficient preparation for rotating the skis 90 degrees to the direction of travel. Work on jumping to the 90 degree position statically and over a small mogul. Make sure the pop is just enough to mount the rail. Some students are intent on making a huge jump but forget to rotate in preparation for the maneuver.

PROGRESSION RECAP
The following is a check-list for your rail grind lesson plan:
• With boots only, practice rotary movement by jumping (small jumps) onto a small practice rail and grind with the boot soles.
• With boots only, practice the semi A-frame stance.
• With skis on, hop onto a small practice rail with the skis 90 degrees to the rail and hop off the end with the skis parallel to the rail.
• In the terrain park, practice over a small wide rail, perform movement analysis and provide feedback.
• In the park, practice on an intermediate narrow rail, perform movement analysis and provide feedback. Introduce the gripping method of holding onto a rail.
• Repeat the practice several times to anchor muscle memory and gain confidence.

Enjoy the grind.

REFERENCES


ROLLAND G. CHARPENTIER
1928-2012

Private services were held in January in Clearwater, Fla. for Rolland G. Charpentier of Northport, Michigan who died Jan. 3. He was 83. He graduated with a master’s degree in business administration from Wayne State University (WSU) and later served in the U.S. Navy stationed in Japan and in the Military Sea Transportation Service during the Korean War. After the service, Rolland worked for Cadillac and General Motors and then 20 years in administration at WSU and retired to northern Michigan working in the same field at Northwestern Michigan College, where he retired.

As a young man, Rolland pursued his love of skiing and was a league sanctioned racer with numerous awards. From the mid-60s to the late 70s, he served as a PSIA-AASI Central Alpine Examiner. He also enjoyed bicycling over long distances of up to 100 miles a day across the country and was an avid tennis player.

Rolland married Carmen Luzod and together they raised a son, Paul. In 1998, he married Barbara Paré and spent the past 14 years together between Northport and Dunedin, Fla. Rolland is survived by his wife, Barbara, brother, Don (Betty) Charpentier and children, Paul (Tracey) Charpentier, Michael (Laura) Paré, Susan (Mike) Pare Prins, Lisa (Ted) Paré TenBrink, Stacey (Salana) Paré and 14 grandchildren.

Burial will be at Fort Custer U.S. Military Cemetery in Battle Creek. Memorial contribution may be directed to the Leelanau Children’s Center at P.O. Box 317, Leland, MI 49654.
As professional ski and snowboard instructors, we share our excitement and enthusiasm of our passion for winter sports with the customer. The common goal is that, as the result of a beginner lesson, the student would not only want to come back but they would want to bring a friend. Every so often we treat this as a job or a business and we forget the excitement that brought us here in the first place.

“There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.” — Sam Walton, Founder, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Often we educate on technique and skills, but we don’t always educate with a priority on customer service. As you may know the ski/snowboard industry has hit a plateau in growth. In this current economy, people do not have as much disposable income. As a result, we have to work harder to bring in new skiers and snowboarders, while keeping our current customers happy. To do this, we have to focus on customer service. The Customer Service Model is an important skill set and is part of our American Teaching System (ATS) along with the Teaching Model and the Skiing/Snowboarding Model. Customer service is an easy thing to teach and will provide large returns both monetarily and in overall morale.

I was recently asked by Nordic Mountain’s Ski School Director, Jessica Gibson, to give a seminar on the Customer Service Model. Nordic Mountain is relatively new to PSIA and under new management. They are enthusiastic about creating a positive learning environment and, as a result, growing their business.

I would like to say thank you to Nordic Mountain for jump starting my ski season. As I drove into the parking lot, I immediately felt the energy in the air. The snow guns were blasting, the lights were shining through the snow. I found the employees were excited and smiling for their first in-service session of the season. I started out the seminar talking about the importance of the “word of mouth” method of generating new business. The important point of that discussion was that people who receive poor customer service most times will not complain directly to the ski school. Instead, they will tell others about their bad experience. Statistically speaking, people who receive poor service will tell 10 people about that bad experience, whereas if they had a good experience, they will only tell about 2.5 others. This illustrates the detrimental effect that poor customer service can have on returning as well as new business.
When I walked into the room, there was a great deal of passion and excitement to participate evident in this group of motivated ski instructors. It was refreshing to have so many new young ski instructors willing to participate and be jazzed about learning. The momentum was electrifying.

The seminar followed the steps of the Customer Service Model. The main principles of the model focus on empathy, active listening, respect, support and acknowledgement of needs. It also includes creating a desire for future challenges and learning, as well as pointing out the progress they have already made. It requires not letting your pride or ego get in the way by acknowledging mistakes and taking steps to correct them. To illustrate these principles, I came up with four difficult scenarios that a ski instructor might encounter. I asked the students to break up into groups and discuss how the situation might be rectified. The students enjoyed the scenarios and had creative ideas for resolving the situations by using the customer service model. They easily participated and had many wonderful ideas for change. The seminar got them to really think about the student from an empathetic standpoint instead of a purely intellectual basis. It is this concern for the customer that will create more business because as human beings we have a desire to be understood. If we as instructors understand our students and their needs then they will trust us and want to continue to come back. They will also tell others about their positive experience.

At the end of the seminar, when I was doing the recap, one of the younger new instructors said “…. you want the students to have so much fun skiing that they want to bring three friends back and not just one.” It is this enthusiasm for teaching and passion for the sport that we want to foster. We need to focus on customer satisfaction by practicing these skills and offering seminars of this kind at all our snowsports schools. This will in turn create more revenue for the instructors, for the snowsports school, for the resort, for the industry and for PSIA-AASI.

**SHERRY MCCABE IS A MEMBER OF PSIA-AASI CENTRAL EDUCATION STAFF AND A LEVEL III INSTRUCTOR AT SUNBURST SKI AREA IN KEWASKUM, WISCONSIN.**

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**REGISTER ONLINE FOR EVENTS!**

For the most efficient and reliable method of registering for an event, visit the PSIA-AASI Central Division website at psia-c.org and sign up! Go to the “Events” tab and follow the instructions. Questions regarding the process can be directed to our office.

**ONLINE:** THE MOST RELIABLE!
- All of the necessary information can be entered, including payment.
- Once the registration is complete, a confirmation is generated

**FAX:** BECOMING MORE UNRELIABLE DUE TO THE TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED WITH TRANSMISSION.
- Complete registration form with payment information.
- If a confirmation is not received within 48 hours, the member should contact the office to ensure that the fax has been received.
- Once the registration is entered, a confirmation is generated.

**SNAIL MAIL:** CAN TAKE A NUMBER OF DAYS FOR THE OFFICE TO RECEIVE.
- Complete registration form with payment information.
- Once the registration is entered, a confirmation is generated.

**EMAIL:** NOT ACCEPTED.
We are unable to take payment information via email and cannot accept these registrations. Members are notified to resubmit in accepted format.
I would like to thank all of the Snowsports School Directors and Central Division Education Staff members who attended the Afton Alps and Boyne Highlands Director’s events. A special big thank you goes out to the staffs of Afton Alps and Boyne Highlands for making the events possible.

The directors spent time understanding the latest snowsports industry trends and how they affect customer service, Central Division and National PSIA-AASI happenings and issues, and first lesson coaching for ski and snowboard instructors. Also covered, were teaching tools for students within the Autistic Spectrum Disorders, the special attention required for children students, and we wound up with video analysis for individual movement improvement. Both Afton Alps and Boyne Highlands were very busy with educational and rewarding experiences for all attendees.

There was a lot of good discussion between the directors on numerous topics, including recruiting, hiring, and retention. At Boyne Highlands, we had the pleasure of Mark Dorsey, PSIA-AASI Executive Director and CEO, and Earl Saline, PSIA-AASI Professional Development Manager, to discuss where the organization has been and where we are going. Next year, we are planning to have representation from the National Office at both Snowsports Directors events (Sections 1, 2, 3 and Sections 4, 5, 6).

Central Division will participate in the August 5-8, 2012, Midwest Ski Areas Association summer meeting at Boyne Highlands. Snowsports Directors are encouraged to attend as part of their resort management’s participation in the conference.

I appreciate your feedback about our events because it helps us understand what we did well and where we can improve as we plan future meetings. If you have special topics of interest that you would like to see discussed in future meetings, please let me know.
Hello Fellow Snowboarders!

Come on snow! We are more than ready! As resorts are making snow as weather permits, I look outside and Mother Nature has hit here in Kalamazoo. About 10-12 inches and the hills are great!

I wanted to share some information about the snowboard staff training event that was at Boyne Highlands on December 8 and 9, 2011. We had a great session. The purpose of the portfolio is to document our individual training throughout the season(s). It outlines our own personal calibration process so that we can remain in compliance with the PSIA-AASI Central staff requirements.

The Portfolio documents our training and experiences so that we can use this to develop future training events. This will improve our consistency in the message we deliver to the general membership. This process is ongoing. We will be continuing this process every year. There is a section of professional development, clinic leading/examining, technical knowledge section, teaching/group leading skills, self assessment of MA, Riding section, and technical knowledge of your own riding/ beginning and end of the season section. It was well received by the staff and we had one of the greatest times of sharing, learning and growing. Look for a Portfolio that will be shared by all divisions in the future for the membership, snowboarders included.

This is the 2nd year of the new snowboard standards, what do you think so far? I would welcome any and all comments! As for the standards, they reference the PSIA-AASI manuals; terminology consistent with these manuals is used throughout the new documents. These standards provide a training focus and represent a minimum competency for each level of certification.

The premise of the certification standards is based upon the concepts of “levels of understanding,” which define stages of learning in degrees of understanding. We view certification as a measure of understanding; levels of certification represent stages of understanding. Candidates will be held to the knowledge and performance standards of the level at which they are testing as well as the criteria for all preceding levels.

Central Division had a voice in creating new freestyle standards that will be a level playing field as the expectations for accreditation. This has been in the works for the past couple of seasons. Expect to see the Freestyle Standards by next fall, 2012! They are thinking of calling the candidates “Freestyle Specialists.” Sweet!

If you sign up early and it’s a scheduled education event (L1, L2 or L3 exam), the event is going to run! So please sign up early! Thanks and I hope to see you out on the hill!
PSIA-AASI CENTRAL WESTERN SPRING RALLY

APRIL 12-13, 2012 • VAIL

Lodging available at the Lionshead Inn, (800) 283-VAIL. Rooms starting at $89.
Must mention PSIA-AASI Central when booking room. Offer good while rooms last.
For more information, contact Dave Kamke at dkamke@hotmail.com.