CENTRAL DIVISION TECHNICAL TEAM CLINICING WITH PSIA ALPINE TEAM COACH MICHAEL ROGAN
It isn’t difficult to list the benefits reaped by resorts who have PSIA-AASI C certified ski and snowboard instructors. Central Division certified instructors bring technical knowledge, teaching skills, industry awareness, and interpersonal qualities to the resort. Your professionalism lends credibility and safety-awareness to the slopes. You bring a better product, raise guest satisfaction, and generate higher net promoter scores (a management tool which may be used to gauge the loyalty of a resort’s customer relationships). Your image inspires skiers and snowboarders, both in-and-outside of lessons. Certified instructors remain on staff longer, lowering training and recruitment costs. You are also helpful, directing guests and answering their questions.

Our education and certification events also benefit the resorts which host them, and these resorts enjoy certain advantages:

First, these events are convenient for the resort’s own instructors — allowing the resort to enjoy a higher percentage of currently certified staff. It is far more economical for those folks to attend an event at the home court without bearing additional travel and lodging expenses. Host resorts enjoy food and beverage revenue, sometimes ticket revenue and have the opportunity to show-off their amenities (advertising). The value of each of these benefits is tangible, and measurable.

A well-run event also generates an associated positive experience that resonates with the participant, such that (nearly) every instructor in attendance reflects fondly upon the venue. They become promoters and ambassadors for the resort. Further, “regular” guests who see education and exams in progress gain an awareness of the existence of our organization, certifications, and standards, and often presume the whole event is comprised by the host school. Seeing training occur is great auxiliary marketing. A recent survey response stated: “On one ride up the chair, I rode with a skier who asked what was going on with the cluster of Ski Instructors. I told him there were National Certification exams going on and that if he saw a skier dressed in green pants and a blue coat, they were examiners for PSIA. He said that it really made him feel good that there was some oversight and standards for instructors and patrollers at (the resort). I guess that’s the right idea — it felt good to be a part of the process of helping to establish standards we can trust.”

PSIA-AASI and the resorts you work for function in a balanced relationship. Without question, the organization exists partially because resorts employ ski and snowboard instructors — “partially,” because in some markets, ski and snowboard schools operate independent of resorts, as either franchises or traveling schools.

Still, we need resorts in order to host events and to conduct exams. We select venues based upon regional demand and access, and attempt to maintain a calendar that is predictable by the membership. Certain event locations have become time-honored tradition, and members are vocal when those venues change.

Our ambition as an organization is to support the venues that view us as partners, and to adjust where we hold events accordingly. As a not-for-profit entity, we are always conscious of the fees and costs borne by our members. Some of those costs are the event themselves, which are a direct function of staff expenses. The rest arise from travel, lodging, meals, and in some cases, ticket costs.
Focus on the Back Pocket

At one point in my personal skiing development I had been encouraged to get a longer outside leg. I worked on that challenge to the point of frustration. I remember thinking that my outside leg was as long as I could get it without causing ineffective movements so I moved on to new skill developments. I was studying still shots and video of my own skiing versus others when it hit me. It wasn’t my outside leg, it was my inside leg! I wasn’t shortening it enough. I initiated my turns by collapsing the inside leg but only to a point where both legs were pretty close to the same length. I returned to the long leg/short leg development with focus this time on the inside leg.

While reviewing those videos and photos of some very dynamic skiers, two things really stood out to me; (1) how close the thigh of the inside leg would get to the skiers chest, and (2) how close the skiers’ back pocket could/would get to the snow. I refer to it as “Back Pocket” rather than hip because to me, hip relates to the outer most part of the upper leg and focusing on that portion of the anatomy would promote ineffective movements.

So the practice began. Once I felt that I was getting my inside leg shorter by allowing my thigh to incrementally move toward my chest (not the other way around), I turned my mental attention to the “Back Pocket.” My thought process was to progressively move the back pocket on the inside of a turn toward the snow (hill, ground, surface, whatever) as I approached the fall line or apex of the turn and continue that movement to completion of the turn. The move is forward and toward the inside of a turn, not back and toward the tail of the ski. It’s just one back pocket at a time, not both pockets. If you could move your inside hand down to draw a line in the snow that followed the arc of the ski, that line would be the target for the back pocket. Stance, speed, pitch, turn radius, the individual’s physical condition, etc. will dictate how close the pocket can get to the target. All of my practice was done on groomed terrain while executing medium and long radius turns. The jury is still out on short radius turns.

I decided to put this exercise to the test and began sharing it with others. All participants were at least intermediate parallel skiers. Some had not yet developed the ability to tip their skis on edge. The results were encouraging so I started sharing it with various levels of seasoned instructors. Overall, the feedback has been positive. When the skier’s stance remained centered and balanced against the outside ski, there were noticeable changes in angulation. Those that had not yet developed the skill, learned to trust that their skis did not have to be directly underneath them at all times. The movement also put a skier into a countered stance relative to the turn radius without ever discussing it. With all of that in mind, I wonder if this exercise could be a single focus shortcut to those skills just referenced. Lately I have reversed the order of presentation, starting with focus on the inside back pocket then enhancing that movement with focus on continued shortening of the inside leg.

I realize this exercise may not be for everyone but I wanted to put it out there to generate thoughts and discussions as well as feedback. I have been working on it for a few seasons now and reinforcement from others finally convinced me to put it in writing. Thanks to those who supported and encouraged me, including Nicholas Grimes and thanks to Mitchell Hauss who helped name the exercise.

Regards,
Dave Smith

PSIA-AASI C, Alpine Level III
Background: 30+ years as Alpine Instructor/Trainer at Perfect North Slopes, Indiana
Past 3 seasons Instructor at Mad River Mountain, Ohio
My introduction to snowsports safety rules began years ago when I was a patroller for the National Ski Patrol. After becoming a ski instructor I continued to follow the safety rules and taught them to my students.

Somewhat later, during my Alpine Level III examination, I gave what I believe to be a unique and interesting teaching presentation. Perhaps, I thought, I should use the topic of safety as part of my presentation.

I was also interested in training my memory at the time, since I was studying PSIA training manuals and trying hard to retain the knowledge. I looked at how we can improve our memory skills and more easily access recall. I knew that hooks, imagination, repetition and action all played a part for me in remembering names, shopping lists, firing orders, etc. I often played a game with my children involving the grocery list, assigning items to their bodies ... you would be surprised at how much their memory skills improved.

The outcome was putting “Your Responsibility Code” On The Body. It’s so simple that you can teach it to a 4 year old or a 74 year old.

For this game to work, we must tap into a few memory keys that help us anchor the information. 1) **Touch** your body when ‘hooking’ a memory item in place (a kinesthetic anchor). 2) **Visualize** the picture of the body that we are creating (see below). 3) Whenever you can, **use action in the visual picture.** 4) Stand in a circle and **actively verbalize/ lead your group through the seven points.** Yep, VAK-it!

**SKI/RIDE RESPONSIBILITY CODE ON THE BODY:**

1. **Feet:** Stay in Control (**Tap your boots “With our feet, we will ski/ride in control”).**

2. **Brakes:** Use approved safety devices (**Tap where your brakes are “We must use approved safety devices”).**

3. **Chest Stop Sign:** Always stop in a safe place (**Tap chest “On our chest we wear a bright red Stop sign…we still stop in a safe place”) 

4. **Yield Sign on Back:** Look uphill and yield (**Tap back “On our back we wear a bright yellow Yield Sign, when we start, we will look uphill and yield into traffic”**)

5. **Head:** The person ahead has the right of way (**Tap your helmet “The person ahead of us has the right of way”**)

6. **Eyes:** Observe all posted signs (**Touch close to your eyes “We must observe all posted signs”**)

7. **Brain:** Know how to load and unload safely (**Point to your brain “We must have the knowledge to load and unload safely.”**)

Though not in the same order, it gets to the heart of it. Here is the list in order as listed on the NSAA’s website.
1. Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.

2. People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.

3. You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.

4. Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.

5. Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.

6. Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.

7. Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

As an experienced ski instructor, I might add an equally important eighth rule to the Code:

8. Take lessons from a PSIA-AASI Certified Snowsports Instructor (point to the instructor - “He or she has safety knowledge and skills which we want to learn”).

Enjoying snow sports requires a little bit of knowledge, and a whole lot of Common Sense. The problem with this thinking though is that all too often sense isn’t really common on the mountain, as we see too many skiers and snowboarders who fail to follow Your Responsibility Code.

We’ve all made mistakes, gotten too excited, stopped under a chair, etc. But with this little visual anchoring game, hopefully we can raise our situational awareness and better protect the skiing public. And, yes, my Level III Examiners liked my safety teaching presentation!

2019 Spring Rally & Symposium.

Join Pros and their families from Central, the Northwest, Northern Rocky, and Intermountain Divisions for a weekend of fun, exploration, and community. Ski and Ride with Education Staff from all over the U.S.

Come see why Sun Valley, Idaho is one of the most-celebrated and recognized resorts in North America.

Right after, head to Big Sky, MT for the 2019 National Academy!

Save the Date!

Discount on Tickets Available
Lodging Package details TBA at www.psia-c.org

Derek Altof from Deer Valley
Come March, many Central Instructors pack up their gear and head out West, finishing their season with spring break lessons at one of the “major” resorts. This is the value behind PSIA-AASI certification — the true “portability” of the credential.

To some, this may seem like a big leap from a small hill—so we’ve taken a few moments to catch up with some recruiters and trainers with Central Division ties. Keystone Resorts Paul Bowman, Park City’s Justin Soine and Deer Valley’s Derek Altof talk about making the commitment and getting onboard.

RS: When you gentlemen recruit from the Midwest, what are you looking for? How much commitment? Is it difficult to find housing?

PB: At Keystone, I am looking for a developmental mindset. Someone who is eager to learn and share what they have learned. Obviously, this comes with a schedule that supports our guests. We offer a 17, 30 or 90 day commitment. Housing can be tough. At Keystone we have the luxury of more employee housing than most resorts, but ideally you will want to live in an apartment of your own. On average it’s about $700-1000 a month to rent a room in Summit county.

JS: I am looking for someone who is excited to come to work each day, someone who is ready to give a great product to our guest and someone who wants to learn and grow as an instructor. The teaching and skiing are important. The enthusiasm and guest experience are just as, or more, important. Our minimum schedule at Park City is a 16 day (point) commitment.

With Salt Lake City just 35 minutes from the Resort, and the surrounding towns of Heber, Midway and Kamas close by, there are housing options within an easy drive of the Resort.

DA: We value instructors who enjoy teaching all ages and ability levels. 80% of our business is children’s programs and family lessons, so we are looking for instructors that are comfortable teaching these types of lessons. At this time, we have flexible work commitment options and dorm style housing available for spring break. We also offer free company/community transportation between our housing properties and work. We have scheduled a new hire training event for March 4-7, and may run additional training sessions if there is enough interest. We welcome you to apply online at http://www.deervalley.com/About/Employment, and look forward to seeing you this spring!

RS: What is the biggest shock to Central instructors teaching out-west?

PB: The length of runs and the off-piste snow surface. The national standard is a national standard but environment and acclimation plays a role in our application. Simply skiing a pitch that is steeper than you are used to will take a few tries to get out of your head and get back to applying what you know. Be ready for it, embrace it, and apply what you know. You’ll be great.

JS: I agree with Paul that it is usually the length of run and the off-piste skiing. It takes time to apply what you know to this new environment. That said, it does happen and it’s a whole different world of skiing when it does. Skiing on a mountain every day in various types of snow and weather is an amazing experience.

I would add that the length of lesson is also one of the things that is much different when teaching out West. When you have one guest in a private lesson all day, it can be initially challenging to know how to pace the day. There are many factors that go into proper pacing. When you have a guest all day, you need to spread out the lesson material, incorporate plenty of skiing and not rush to get everything in that you want to share with them. You have seven hours for a full-day lesson. This gives you an opportunity to take your time and let the guest internalize and practice the skills you are working on with them. There is also a fitness factor. You need to ensure that the guest has proper time to adjust to the altitude and mountain conditions. Being able to gauge when to slow your speed and pace down and when to take breaks is important to your guest’s success. If you have the same guest for multiple days, it adds yet another layer.

DA: I completely echo the environmental differences highlighted by Paul and Justin. Additionally, the amount of business and work you can expect in comparison to most Central resorts is significantly greater. It is usual to work full days and spring is a great time to increase your teaching hours and experience.

RS: What deficiencies do you usually need to account for when bringing on Central instructors- is it pacing lessons over a day, or week? Is it time management and finding their way...
Sitting on a Park (Mall) Bench

An overlooked learning tool

By Bradferd L. Miller, PSIA-AASI C Nordic Education Staff

(Enter stage left) What started as a much needed rest break during a shopping expedition with Mrs. Miller has now turned into my non-scientific study of human interaction. As a faux mall psychologist, my focus has been on my peers; notably those carrying multiple shopping bags, clothing drooping due to the weight of perspiration and the ever present “deer in the headlights” look. Humor aside, I found I relate to their situation by drawing conclusions based on personal experience. As much as I dread research, I was curious to find out if I was a poor old sod sitting on a park/mall bench, or if I was engaging in something constructive.

To my surprise my first Google search produced a picture of a park bench. Jacquelin Martinali’s post: “Learn about people by observing them,” shed some light. I found that I was inadvertently creating an observation Lab. After scrolling to the end of the post I tapped on a reference article by Saul McLeod which explained different types of observation labs. It became clear that my non-scientific observation lab fell under the helm of Naturalistic Observation Lab, akin to studying animals in the wild rather than in a Zoo. Although the Naturalistic Observation Lab can’t definitely determine cause and effect, because variables cannot be manipulated, it did provide greater ecological validity in observations. (Exit stage right)

THE BUS STOP LAB

“I look at the world and notice it turning.”
( George Harrison: “While my Guitar gently weeps”)

(Enter stage left) Watching snow sports participants exit busses provides an easily accessible naturalist observation lab for snowsports instructors. This past November, I took an opportunity to observe a variety of snow sports participants enter and exit busses. While some moved about comfortably in this setting, others did not. Individuals in the later category ranged from parents with children and gear in tow, people with physical limitations, and first time participants. The Lab consistent variables were ecological- being temperature, altitude and icy walking surfaces. The unknown variables were individual in make-up such as: state of mind, physical fitness, experience and communication limitations. As a snowsports instructor, the easiest group to identify with were the first time participants. Walking clumsily down the bus steps with gear in hand they hit the icy walkways peering at their environment as if they were stepping onto the dark side of the moon. (Exit stage right)

APPLYING PEOPLE SKILLS

“The more we think about, the greater the unknown.”
(Neil Peart, Gary Weinrib and Alex Zivojinovich: “Mystic Rhythms “)

(Enter stage left) As snow sports instructors our ability to observe individuals in Naturalistic settings coupled with empathy can potentially provide a great experience for snowsports customers. PSIA-AASI’s new “Teaching
Greetings and Happy New Year to you from Southern Indiana. As Snowsports director’s committee chair, I envision the role as representing the needs and challenges of Central Division’s Snowsports Directors. Most recently, I was included in the National Snowsports Directors’ Taskforce headed by PSIA-AASI CEO Nick Herrin. After attending the PSIA-AASI C Board meeting held in Chicago, Illinois on August 17-18, 2018 later attending the MSAA Summer Meetings and Trade Show at Boyne Highlands from August 19–22. Both events provided a positive learning environment for all attending. At the August board meeting, attending BOD members contributed and shared under the direction of our Executive Director — Ron Shepard. I was impressed at the results achieved by the members working together.

A Very Successful Boyne Highlands Snowsports Directors’ Workshop was held on December 6th & 7th, 2018. Directors received special pricing to encourage their attendance. A combination of on-hill clinics with roundtable and presentations/updates were included. Great snow conditions, grooming and service was provided by Boyne Highlands Resort — Thanks to Richard Wren, Logan Price and Staff. Joining us for two days and leading clinics was Nick Herrin, a ball of energy and information concerning the work being done by all divisions and disciplines at the National level, including, but not limited to:

- “What makes a great teacher and why?”
- New manuals and workbooks, coming soon.
- Future Report Cards coming for use by Snowsports Schools.

- How parents can work with Children forthcoming. National TEAM not Teams. “One voice, one direction.”
- Technical Skills, Teaching Skills, and People Skills.
- New FREE Programs available through the national web site with 2 additional programs offered to members only. All programs encourage better understanding for instructors and support the needs of the schools and instructors.
- Information was shared about the two Snowsports Management Seminars for Directors, at Snowbird, Utah, on Jan 24th, 2019, and then at Killington, Vermont, on Feb 4th, 2019: http://www.thesnowpros.org/events/snowsports-management-seminar.

Currently, we are looking at a Spring event in Sections 1, 2 and 3 if interest dictates. If you have suggested dates, please forward your response back to me. More information will be sent to directors soliciting input. Also, the invite goes out to all to attend the Summer MSAA Summer Meetings and Trade Show in Grand Geneva, WI, in August 2019.

Did you know about the:

- Free use of the PSIA, AASI and “Go with a Pro” logos for all printed material or website uses.
- Discounted advertising in the Central Line publication.
- Free Help Wanted Ads on the psia-c.org Web Site and perhaps in The Central Line
- New E-learning Courses to Create a Great Beginner Experience. https://lms.thesnowpros.org/lms-courses/
- The Snowsports Members Toolkit provides a plethora of information to help your program: http://www.thesnowpros.org/member-school-toolkit/token/632af06b-c527-4ead-81ce-354e25b5b4d

- The new Teaching Snowsports Manual is available now.
- Directors can use the PSIA-AASI C Job Board to Recruit New Hires. And, it’s FREE.
- Receive Up to a 30% Bulk Discount on Education Materials.
- Download NSAA’s Cookbook of Strategies for Beginner Conversion.
- Save the Dates — PSIA-C Spring Rally @ Sun Valley Idaho 4/12/19-4/14/19

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Discussions concerning certification pins and their meaning has been a fairly big item lately. Wearing a Certification pin and/or Specialist pin signifies a great accomplishment. My PSIA-AASI certification process began at Sugar Loaf Resort in 1984 where certification was required by Ski School Director Mark Fisher. After passing my Associates exam (now Level II) I felt I had met my obligation to Sugar Loaf.

When the 1985 season began long time friend and technical mentor John “JP” Peppler informed me that an Associates certification was just the beginning of my educational journey and not the end. In 1985, “JP” put me through an intensive educational program preparing me for what proved to be a successful Full certification process. In 1985, pins were not part of the certification presentation kit, however, fellow Sugar Loaf instructor and good friend Joel Woods presented me with one of his gold pins, my most cherished one. Whether I wear pins, patches, both, or none of the aforementioned, my certifications represent an educational commitment to myself and my students & athletes.

Continued Education is an integral part of snowsports in an ever changing world. The ability to enhance technical, teaching and people skills via continued education provides a crucial component in customer service. As PSIA-AASI moves forward, more emphasis has been placed on education resulting in offerings that are more contemporary, on-line courses and specialist programs are examples. Working relationships and industry partnerships have also led to customer driven educational outcomes. Open lines of communication and collaboration have led to consistencies amongst divisions. Team work within disciplines has led to uniting our common denominators, making “cross pollinating” far easier than in the past.

By continuing education, we can commit to our learning skills which are vital to good teaching. Continued education take aways can lead to better connections with students, open doors to better positions and afford us the ability to teach other disciplines. Most importantly students and athletes can reap the benefits of our continued education: a/k/a Customer service in its truest form. As John Peppler stated 35 seasons ago “certification is just the beginning of an educational journey.” Whether you wear a pin or a patch, continued education is an important part of being certified and an obligation we owe ourselves and our snowsports customers.

Celebra el Viaje Amigos.
On a snowy morning last December eleven instructors from various mid-west resorts came to Boyne Highlands Resort. These snowsports teachers were excited to be the first participants in a newly formulated Central Division Senior Specialist 1 program. Their goal, to be Senior Specialist 1 accredited.

The stated purpose of the program “is to provide educational training for instructors of all ages and various abilities to gain the tools and knowledge necessary to provide high-quality teaching and performance enhancement outcomes for the snowsports senior seeking lessons.”

It is available to all PSIA-AASI Disciplines.

Central Division members and member snowsports schools are aware of the increasing number of senior skiers in our Industry. This growing population often seeks fun and further skiing improvement through snowsports lessons that include age specific activities in a social environment. Age specific lesson plans incorporate educational tools such as the CAP (Cognitive, Affective and Physical) model, as applied to challenges like steep terrain or difficult snow conditions. Lesson activities take into account endurance, strength, cognitive levels, dehydration, auditory limitations, visual limitations, applied balance and/or physical challenges such as paresthesia in the feet.

The instructors taking this Senior Specialist 1 clinic were there to understand, learn and share teaching strategies which meet this demographic’s specific needs.

To implement this program, Central Division partnered with other divisions, including Northwest, and created a teaching curriculum addressing senior skiers, telemarkers, snowboarders and cross-country skiers.

Education Staff members Julie Nitzsche, Sonja Rom and Jon Stepleton led the clinics.

THE SENIOR SPECIALIST MANUAL
There is great value in carefully studying the online PSIA-Northwest Manual/Workbook and in answering the ten essay questions because you will gain a better understanding of the characteristics of your senior guest. The manual and your essay answers will give you confidence and make the clinic more meaningful and fun.

REGISTERING FOR THE CLINIC
You can register on-line, or, as I chose, call PSIA National Member Services directly. I politely asked if the services person had time to register me for the event. The registration process took less than 5 minutes.

INDOOR DISCUSSIONS
On Saturday and Sunday the groups had “round table” discussions about typical problems or limitations which seniors may exhibit and how we could adjust our focus to teach our senior guests. We talked about how seniors tend to be goal oriented. We considered “the learning partnership” between the guest and instructor. There were audio-visual presentations.

By Gary M. Evans
involving slides with a guided discussion about the Senior Cap Model-student profile, the Learning Curve (Diagram A), Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs pyramid, as well as Fluid/ Crystalized Intelligence (Diagram B).

Diagram A

A Senior Specialist 1 quiz is taken via group discussion.

OUTDOOR TIME
Leader Julie took our group to a beginner hill where, right away, we began to consider the senior demographic. We used low impact exercises to loosen up. On the first chairlift ride we engaged in “Chairlift talks” to discuss the senior guest and appropriate VAK (Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic) learning styles for this time of day and for the first run.2

At the top of the hill, these VAK learning modes were taken into consideration while warming up with a first run — there are many versions for different people. This first run led into many runs that built from feeling a low impact continuous movement warm-up to a mix of slow-speed large, medium and short radius wedge turns, before transitioning to skidded parallel turns, diagonal slides and rounded basic parallel turns.

During the morning hours, our group quickly engaged in a “learning exchange” where each instructor took a moment to share their understanding of a senior’s potential issues, based upon actual teaching experience. Different approaches to teaching strategies and concepts were discussed. Leader Julie reminded us of safety issues and how we should consider proper terrain choice when teaching older adults.

The group also discussed the many teaching approaches available to help seniors improve and to have great fun in a ski lesson. We agreed that it was important to give seniors a strong visual demonstration of any maneuver by skiing above, beside and below them.

Tactile (kinesthetic) awareness was a well-discussed topic since some seniors may suffer from problems which can cause peripheral neuropathy—an altered, nonspecific sensation in the feet/legs. Such paresthesia (numbness, tingling) can result in balance problems.

The topics of caution, anxiety and fear that a senior guest might have on the hills was addressed. We opined that we should always try to make the senior skier comfortable during the lesson. We considered how ski instructors can introduce older adult students to constant rate of speed, skidded parallel turns, on gentle terrain.

Some of our skiing maneuvers involved making turns and inspecting our individual ski tracks in the snow. We maintained a hip-width–apart stance while skiing, which resulted in a stable platform and make it easier to “make angles” with our body. We practiced “shuffle turns,” and turns with foot-to-foot movement. We practiced turns where we reduced the weight on the inside ski to achieve a strong edge engagement of the outside ski. We also concentrated on skiing from the feet upward.

The group led by Sonja and Jon discussed many of the same topics listed above. They also talked about the issue of equipment challenges due to fitness levels or health concerns, and how those factors may impact senior’s thoughts about skiing and how the skills are applied. They came to the conclusion that the Learning Partnership is incredibly important so that the Instructor or Coach can gain and then apply this valuable information while formulating a lesson plan.

The final process of the Senior Specialist 1 clinic, on Sunday afternoon, involved a 10 minutes indoor meeting with the group leader who showed each of us a skiing video that had been taken earlier that day. A thorough movement analysis discussion took place with specific suggestions from the leader for our skiing improvement.

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CONCLUSION

By the end of the two day clinic, we had targeted the unique characteristics of our senior guests. We had also enjoyed an improvement in our skiing ability! It was with a great feeling of accomplishment that all eleven participants received a Senior Specialist I diploma, credential pin, handshake and a smile from a leader.

So, if you are looking for a fun, informative and collaborative workshop, this season, I highly recommend that you attend a Senior Specialist I clinic.

“Don’t wait. The time will never be just right.”
- Samuel Clemens

Gary M. Evans, a PSIA Certified Alpine Level III Instructor with Children’s Specialist II/Trainer and Senior Specialist 1 credentials, is an Instructor/Trainer in the Children’s Program at Michigan’s Blizzard Ski and Snowboard School. He also teaches skiing to children, teenagers and seniors at Pine Knob Ski and Snowboard School.

References:
1 PSIA-AASI C Senior Specialist information page.
2 V.A.K.: show them, tell them, and let them feel the sensation.

Outstanding Instructors — We would like to have directors nominate their outstanding instructor(s). A certificate will be awarded at Fall events with a Free one-day Clinic Certificate presented to those selected. Note: Name, discipline, and a paragraph about why they deserve this honor should be included.

As your SSD Committee chair, it’s exciting to be contributing to the great things that are happening in Central Division on behalf of All Snow sports Directors. Should you have questions, comments, concerns or need assistance please contact me at (812) 723-4696, ext. 232 (Snowsports) and ringlis@paolipeaks.com or ringlis@vinu.edu

Thanks for all that you do
Roy Inglis
PSIA-AASI-C Snow sports Director Committee chairperson

Roy Inglis is a PSIA Alpine Level III Ski Instructor with a Children’s Specialist 2 credential. He is the Snowsports Director at Paoli Peaks Ski Area in Paoli, Indiana (1 hour NW of Louisville, Kentucky) and has taught for the last 28 years.

Senior Specialist 1 Credential, Central Division: Thank You to the “First Participants.”

Two years ago, the idea of a Senior Specialist PSIA-AASI program was brought to Central’s Board of Directors. Fast forward – Boyne Highlands, MI, December 8, 2018 – the First Senior Specialist 1 (SrS1) credential clinic was offered. 11 members signed up and two group were formed. The members participated in a 2-day on-snow clinic focused on learning about the “Ideal” senior guest in the novice to intermediate zones. The clinic requires active participation, both on the hill and in discussions. The 11 members participated in information sharing, chairlift talks and many runs with senior focused movements. The groups were very active and decades of experience were shared, laughed about, analyzed and skied out. The pace was relaxed, relationships ruled, and low impact, continuous movements encouraged. The clinic revolves around understanding, and teaching the senior client while enhancing personal skiing and teaching. Safety, Fun and Learning is for all ages. Thank you to NW Division and Central’s senior specialist team which helped bring this program to Central Division. And, Thank You to this first group of participants. My goggles are off and helmet tipped in honor of those who took the first SrS1 clinic and now proudly wear the Senior Specialist 1 pin. I encourage all members to expand their teaching portfolio and I hope to see you at a future Central Division Senior Specialist 1 clinic.

By Julie Nitzsche, (Alpine L3, Education Staff; Board Member, Children’s and Senior’s Administrator)
Watch the winning runs in every alpine World Cup racing discipline. Just as they begin to exit the fall-line, the extended outside leg will be near its longest length and the flexed inside leg will be near its shortest length. At this point, their edge angle is near the highest and they are fully engaged in their carved arc. As they exit the fall line, the longer, old outside leg begins to shorten while the shorter, old inside leg begins to lengthen until they are at equal slightly flexed lengths when the skis are flat against the snow. Next, observe the winning racers’ legs when their skis are in the flat transition between their powerful turns. Notice, both legs are bent near the middle third of their flexing/extending range. Then, as the skier continues, you will see the new outside leg continuing to get longer and the new inside leg continuing to get shorter. You will rarely see both legs extending when the skis are going to the flat ski transition unless the ground is moving away from them as they attempt to remain from becoming airborne, nor will you see both legs flex, unless they are absorbing terrain.

The transition process I call the reciprocal transition, is characterized by the lengthening of the new outside leg and simultaneous shortening of the new inside leg as the skier releases from one arc and engages the next. The center of this transition is where both skis are flat to the snow (green circles in figures 4, 5, 6 and 7). The movements to and from this flat ski transition are at the apex of the turn, when both skis are at their maximum edge engagement, the outside leg is extended long and inside leg if flexed short (yellow circles in figures 4, 5, 6 and 7).

There are three distinct transitions between turns. The center of the transition is that point when both skis are flat to the snow, the upper body is perpendicular to the slope and both legs are at similar lengths. The teeter-totter figures show the transition in the middle diagram of each.

1. BILATERAL EXTENSION OF BOTH LEGS (Figure 1)

- This is what many of us do, most of the time.
- Slowest transition from edge-to-edge, slow edge change.
- Can be powerful, strong.
- Pushes center of mass away from the base from support, the skis. Head and hips move up at transition. Body gets taller, slows entry to the new turn.
- Maintains contact with terrain that falls away from you.
- May unweight both skis if extending rapidly.
- Lengthening both legs can push the center of mass and head forward.
- Skier cannot engage inside lower leg or foot to its little toe edge from the flat ski transition until the inside leg is shortened.
- Taller stance is generally more relaxing to let both legs get long. Skier does not tire as much.
2. BILATERAL FLEXING OF BOTH LEGS (Figure 2)

This is what a few of us do, some of the time.
- Fastest transition from edge to edge, fast edge change.
- Weak, skier tends to stay flexed.
- Drops the center of mass towards the base of support. Head and hips get lower at transition. Body gets shorter, speeds entry to the new turn.
- Maintains contact with terrain that rises up to you.
- May unweight both skis if flexing rapidly.
- Have to actively pull both legs back to keep the hips forward along the length of your skis. Flexing both legs tends to drop the hips back.
- Shortened new inside leg can easily and quickly edge to its little toe edge from the flat ski transition. This results in a faster inside ski engagement and transition. Need to pull feet back to maintain pressure towards the tips of the skis.
- Squatty stance tends to tire the skier faster.

3. RECIPROCAL, NEW OUTSIDE LEG IS EXTENDING WHILE THE NEW INSIDE LEG IS FLEXING (Figure 3)

- This is an opportunity for many of us, to do at any time.
- Speed is determined by the rate the inside leg flexes, then changes edges; strength is determined by how intensely the outside leg extends. This transition can be either fast or slow as you alter the timing and intensity of the reciprocal leg extension and flexion.
- Powerful and strong enough, rarely weak. Entry to turn can be fast or slow, the rate of inside leg shortening (fast) and outside leg lengthening (intensity) determines this.
- Center of mass stays level, neither moves towards or away from the base of support at transition. Head and hips stay level at transition. Body height changes little.
- Maintains contact with most terrain changes that are not extreme.
- Does not (usually) unweight either skis, easily aids pressure transfer to the outside ski.
- Extending outside leg pushes hip and head up and forward, pulling both feet back aids maintaining forward pressure along the length of the skis.
- Shortened inside leg easily and quickly engages edging to the inside, little toe edge when tipped, extending outside leg engages to powerful, pressured big toe edge of the outside ski.
- Lower stance is fast, powerful, but possibly tiring since you are in a high-performance mode.

In figure 4, PSIA-C Alpine Education Team Member Charlie Austin is demonstrating carved medium radius turns. At the extended transition, (green circle) both legs are extending, driving his head and hip up, away from the snow. After the midpoint of the transition, he begins to shorten his inside leg and he keeps his longer outside leg long to the turns apex (yellow circles).

In figure 5, from the apex of the turn, Charlie’s old long outside leg gets shorter and the old inside leg gets longer. They are at similar lengths as the skis are at the flat ski, reciprocal transition point. After the transition, one leg continues to get longer and the other shorter until the turn’s apex is reached.

continued on page 16
In the above figures 6 and 7, I captured two young racers at Copper Mountain during early season training. Both skiers show reciprocal leg activity from apex to apex, through the flat ski transition. The green circles represent the area where the skis are flat and the skier has both legs in the middle third of their potential length, where at the apex of the turns (yellow circles), the outside leg is long and the inside leg is flexed short.

In figure 8 below, PSIA-C Alpine Education Team Member Chris Fisher shows the highly engaged and edged ski exit from the fall line to the reciprocal leg transition and back to another highly engaged arc. The lengthening of one leg and the simultaneous shortening of the other meet at equally flexed legs when the skis are flat. The activity does not pause, they are continuous.

Why do many of us extend bilateral legs as we transition to flat skis?
It's a habit that we were taught in an era of straight skis, we observed from others and we learned it well! I apologize for my part in teaching, demonstrating and reinforcing this less effective habit. We see it in our demonstrators in dynamic carved arcs, two footed tracks, easy parallel turns and even wedge turns. You will see it when we shuffle through turns and in our linked pivot slips. It is everywhere, except for winning racers and a few of our trainers. This is now changing, as we are seeing more reciprocal leg activity through our transitions. As our equipment and understanding evolves, so does our opportunity to update our movements.

Older equipment and techniques required us to extend and unweight in order to release our skis. This extension is stronger with both legs extended. Its need is rare with today’s equipment and understanding.

Many of us struggle with our weight getting back and to the inside of our turns. Extending both legs may give us the power to get forward when our balance and alignment is back and to the inside of the arc or, you could pull both feet back beneath you as one leg is extending and the other is shortening. The reciprocal transition encourages pulling your feet back as you go through your transition rather than extending both legs to keep moving pressure towards the tips of your skis. You might have to go to the gym and get stronger.

As you are extending both legs, the inside foot has limited ability to tip to its little toe side, to help engage the edges. This inside foot tipping ability becomes more available as the ankle, knee and hip flex to shorten the inside leg. This allows the inside femur to rotate externally and the foot to tip to its little toe side edge.

**TACTICS TO UNLEARN BILATERAL LEG EXTENSION TO A FLAT SKI TRANSITION**

*The athletic start.* Start each run with hips, knees and ankles flexed in the middle third of their range, then begin your long leg/short leg activity as the turn develops. This slightly flexed, forward position is similar to how you might stand if you were an elite tennis player waiting to receive a serve. This prevents us from starting with both legs extended. In the past, many of us start with both legs near fully extended, then begin our long/leg/short leg activity.

Add a longer flat ski traverse, legs equally flexed transition to your turns for some slow...
around the resort? How about the skiing and teaching skills — are Central instructors any more or less ready for lineup?

PB: Honestly I am always excited to have Central instructors join us. It turns out when you only have 300 vertical feet you get pretty good at understanding the technical side of things and you know how to teach with less. The biggest change is learning how to ski your clients more and learn how the huge variety of terrain can help build different skills. Everyone thinks that elevation or fitness will be a problem but remember, your clients are usually from out of town too and you have proper technique which makes your movements a lot more efficient.

JS: I tend to think of Central Instructors as good teachers — because you have to be with limited terrain. I would encourage Central Instructors to ski their guests more and allow the terrain to help with the teaching/learning. When you have a thousand vertical feet, you don’t need to do drills the whole way down the run. Be sure to let your guest see and experience the Mountain.

Once you are in the mountain environment, the skiing usually comes with time. You’re not going to ski off trail at the same speed and accuracy as other L2 and L3 folks right away. Just embrace that as an opportunity to get better. You will get better. I promise!

As for deficiencies, I would say that learning a Western mountain’s layout is certainly different than learning the layout at a typical Midwest mountain that only has a few chairlifts and 20 or 40 runs that all filter back to one main location. I work at the largest ski resort in the country and one wrong turn can mean an hour to get back to where you started or wanted to go. Which leads to the time management. It can be challenging, at first, to know how long it’s going to take to get from point A to point B and back. Don’t assume that the amount of time it took you on your day off is the same amount of time it’s going to take with your guests.

DA: It is our goal to set our staff up for success daily here at Deer Valley. This will begin with with your initial training as a new instructor to our resort. Central instructors tend to bring strong people, teaching, and technical skills to their roles here. Our initial training will help our Central folks understand how to adapt to our environment and adjust their lesson delivery to head off any potential “deficiencies” before they develop.

That said, we have also engineered our lesson programs so they are easy for instructors to manage. Our Children’s Programs and Max 4 semi private adult lessons all have guaranteed low class ratios. Furthermore, we have a large supervisory staff in place to support our instructors daily. Based on your daily lesson assignment, you will have a morning meeting to set you up for a successful day. There will also be opportunities to check in with our supervisors at lunch and hot chocolate breaks throughout the day. This allows us create an incredible experience for our guests and staff alike.

RS: How aware are the instructors of those gaps? Do you find (generally) that they are receptive to development and feedback? Defensive? Engaging? How do you help them assimilate?

PB: Be eager to learn what you don’t know. The biggest mistake can be hiding behind the assumptive competence that comes with whatever certification you have. It will probably take about a month before you are totally comfortable with the new terrain or tactics. Ask questions and learn fast. After all, being wrong can really be the fastest way to becoming right. Don’t expect to come out shredding double black bumps when you get here, but know that you have ownership of the same fundamentals that are needed to accomplish any task. Take your time, trust your knowledge, and you will be there in no-time.

JS: I think each individual instructor who comes from the Midwest to work at a destination resort, has a different sense of where they may have gaps. Some may know they don’t ski bumps well (or at all) and others may think they ski bumps really well until they step on to the top of a bumped-out bowl at a Western resort.

I think the worst thing you can do is walk into a locker room as a cert 3 (for example) and not be humble about what you are going to learn in a new environment. Acknowledge that it will take time for you to ski with the same speed and accuracy as those who have been doing it in that place for years. On the flip side, be confident that you will get up to speed and that you do bring value to the locker room and lineup.

You also need to be open to feedback, to coaching and to others who have more local knowledge than you do. Ask questions and learn from those around you.

Teaching skiing is only part of what we do. We are here to provide an exceptional guest experience. Knowing where to tell your guests to eat, how to pace the day, where the best snow is going to be, how to break down barriers and get the guest to a place where they want to ski with you again, are all part of being a destination resort ski instructor.
PSIA-AASI CEO Nick Herrin presents the 2018 Instructor of the Year Award to Bradford Miller.
This is why we are so grateful to the resorts who seek to help us keep all event related costs low: Crystal Mountain, Michigan was recently recognized as PSIA-AASI Central Division’s “Resort Partner of the Year.” The resort covers tickets for all participants, lodging for the education staff, even provides the meal vouchers for clinicians to keep event costs low. We hope members pay attention to this support and to event ticket prices, and we’re seeking to make it easier to identify total event costs. For 2019-2020, all events will include ticket prices in the event registration details; resorts will be required to specify this amount before the event can be scheduled.

It is our intent to recognize and support the resorts that see PSIA-AASI members as partners — not prospects — and we would like to shift our focus and support to venues and schedules that better reflect this support from resort management. This is going to require your understanding and accommodation, as in some cases the shift might be an inconvenience to you — if your home resort is one of those charging high $ ticket prices to other resort employees, yet you ski for free.

If you attend an event at a resort that provides free tickets to participants, there is one thing you can easily do — join us in saying “thank you,” either in person at the skier services desk, via resort surveys, or through social media sites.

PSIA-AASI Central members play an important role at resorts- our certification and education events serve the purpose of keeping members current, inspired, and involved.

We urge you to take a proactive role in supporting those resorts who see us in this light.

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Lyrics excerpts: Aqualung - Jethro Tull; While my guitar slowly weeps- George Harrison, Dark side of the moon- Pink Floyd and Mystic Rhythms-Rush
Poem Excerpt: A view from the park bench- Andrew Blakemore
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deliberate practice.

To assist you in keeping your hips forward, pull both feet back as you transition from long leg/short leg of one turn to the other as the skis go through the phase when they are flat on the snow.

*Relearn old tasks.* Go through all of the exercise and various turn types that you know and see if you can use the reciprocal transition in all of them. You may not be very good at this to begin, but as you apply slow, deliberate practice, you will soon find mastery. This list of activities is long: wedge turns, wedge christies (very difficult!), open parallel, carved-dynamic parallel, short turns to long turns, pivot and side slips, shuffle turns, railroad track turns, garlands, 360’s, backwards skiing, falling leafs, javelin turns, all of the exam tasks, all of your teaching tasks...

Just say “*Never will I extend both legs simultaneously as I go to a flat ski.*” I went through all of my warm up, practice, fun and teaching tasks mentioned above. It has taken me a full season to make this transition. I had a lot of unlearning and new learning to do. Good luck!
CONTACT INFORMATION
PSIA-AASI C
PO. Box 2144
Frankfort, Michigan 49635
Phone: 303-987-9390
Email: Central Division - info@psia-c.org
Email: National - mist@thesnowpros.org
PSIA-AASI National Website: www.thesnowpros.org
PSIA-AASI Central Division Website: www.psia-c.org

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THE CENTRAL LINE STAFF
EDITOR
Gary Evans
garyski3@att.net

PUBLISHER
Robert Wendt, Cultivate Communications
bob@cultivate-communications.com

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Boyne Highlands Resort awards dinner, December 8, 2018: shown are Dave Lundberg, Stephen Helfenbein, PSIA CEO Nick Herrin, Richard Wren and Ron Shepard.