LAYING IT DOWN!

SNOWBOARD NEWS 2019 | THE ‘WHAT IF’ FACTOR | MOUNT BOHEMIA EVENT | SPRING RALLY REPORT | AN ADVENTURE IN ITALY
During my tenure in the snowsports industry both as a full-time year round employee of my home resort Boyne Highlands, and in my career as a certified PSIA snowsports instructor I have learned many things. One important aspect that has stuck out the most to me recently was that the snow sports industry is a relationship industry, which includes:

- Relationships between students and instructors.
- Relationships between guests and the resorts.
- Relationships between suppliers and resorts and the lists goes on and on.

But most importantly, the snowsports industry is a partnership industry. I’m here to tell you PSIA-AASI C’s partnerships are strong and our relationships are growing.

I recently had the privilege of attending the National Ski Areas Association’s annual meeting and trade show with our executive Director Ron Shepard and I was overwhelmed with the gratitude expressed to us for the mere fact that we were attending the event. Our resort partners were very pleased that we were taking part in the conversations that help steer this industry. It cemented the fact that our organization IS a player in the game. We ARE a source of influence in the industry and our opinion matters.

There were two takeaways from the meeting that directly related to our organization and which I felt have the most impact. The first was “Conversion.” Conversion is the idea of taking first-time skiers, riders and snow sports participants and converting them into-long time industry participants. This is a big topic of discussion among our industry partners and is key to the sustainability of our industry.

The second big takeaway was “Return to the core.” The return to the core idea is that we can’t as an industry forget about our core participants, those people that ski and ride multiple time a year regardless of weather or snow conditions. These are our season pass holders and the faces we see time and time again.

It’s exciting to me to have the realization that we are not just the red headed step child of the industry, but we are brothers and sisters in this family and our partners are looking to us for input and action to make sure that our industry is here to stay for many generations of snowsports participants. The teams within our organization are fueled up and ready to go to develop programing and create initiatives to support our partners and help our members become the best we can be.
Thanks to all that attended an event this past season. If you didn’t, we will see you next season! This last season, I had the opportunity to learn and grow as an instructor. It is a great feeling to walk away from an event just pumped up to talk about what was just learned! The Fall Conference brought some renewed stoke into the snowboard world. Every division has added scoring descriptors to their score cards. If you attended a certification event in Central or any other division, you would see the descriptors on the score card. They are located at the bottom of the card for Snowboard, in Central Division.

They are called the “essential elements” as listed here;

- Essential elements were not observed or not present.
- Essential elements are beginning to appear.
- Essential elements appear, but not with consistency.
- Essential elements appear regularly at a satisfactory level.
- Essential elements appear frequently, above required level.
- Essential elements appear continuously, at a superior level.

These scoring descriptors as they relate to Fitts and Posners theory of (motor) skills. Look it up (homework)!

The very best part of this is that we are on our way to being transparent. All information used in scoring is available to all parties; Examiners, Candidates, resort partners and general membership. Thus, creating transparency in evaluation, making the process consistent, understandable and an actionable form of feedback. I love it! This last year a group of us started working on a document that will spell out performance/learning outcomes. A manual, a guide, or whatever it ends up being called will be an outline for all involved to help us on our instructional journey.

I was talking to a group of instructors on the hill about something I read in the new manual (Teaching Snowsports). Smiling, I could see them begin to smile. It was about having fun and getting paid to do it. Are you smiling too?

Thanks, and I hope to see you out on the lake!

David Seelbinder (40th year snowboarding)
AASI Snowboard Administrator
“You got this!” That was the educational advice I received from Shanty Creek Resorts General Manager “Pistol” Pete Bigford one day. Skiing down Schuss Mountain’s Kingdom Kom run can be challenging on Alpine or Tele gear when it’s a sheet of Ice, however the day’s biggest challenge was our gear of choice, cross-country skate gear. After three sketchy parallel short swing turns, I ended up sliding down backwards with my face in the snow. Mercifully, my body was slowed by the run out. I picked myself up and watched Pistol Pete make beautiful Tele turns down Kingdom Kom’s steep, icy pitch. I wouldn’t recommend Pistol Pete’s skills enhancement activity to your friend’s or students, however, it showed me I had become more reliant on gear than on skill. It was time to connect with Telemark’s cross-country skiing roots, a fact that I overlook all too often.

**Contemporary Telemarking**

Alpine-like-boots, step-in bindings and a plethora of skis to choose from have changed the face of Contemporary Telemark skiing. What once belonged to the free heeling Nordic world is now accessible to other disciplines, specifically Alpine. The lure of modern gear, the thrill of a new challenge and, dare I say “boredom,” brought me to Telemark’s doorstep. Drawing parallels between Telemark and Alpine was much easier for me than drawing parallels from the Nordic world. Although I was functionally Telemarking our discipline’s unique feature, the Lead Change, it was little more than a buzz term I would throw out. I had become a poser revolving around Alpine fundamentals with little understanding of Telemark’s unique fundamental, the Lead Change.

**Natural Movement**

Around 8000 B.C., Cave dwellers in what is now Russia and Scandinavia adorned their walls with drawings that appeared to be folks on skis. Used for travel, hunting and war early skis provided folks a way to move across snow covered surfaces using natural walking movements. Modern equipment incorporates plastic boots, step in bindings with a stiff retention and an assortment of skis—the majority of which are Alpine. Telemark skiing requires more muscular strength to perform than Alpine skiing which relies more on skeletal strength, however, modern Telemark equipment allows for a larger degree of skeletal stacking, as in Alpine. Alpine boots with stiff fore-aft flex and locked down heels limit the ankle’s full range of motion and the flexing of the metatarsophalangeal joint (a/k/a M.T.P.), where the ball of the foot meets the big toe. These important movements are critical in walking, running, Cross-Country and Telemark. A simple Kinesthetic example would be walking in Alpine boots as compared to walking in street shoes. The same feeling would apply when comparing shuffling in Alpine gear as opposed shuffling in Nordic gear.

**The Challenge**

Modern gear makes Telemarking easier and more enjoyable, however getting in touch with Telemark’s roots by down hillling on cross-country skis can improve your lead change. Use cross-country gear that fits well and your Alpine/Telemark poles-skate gear works best. Find a hill with which you are comfortable. It’s best to start on a shallow pitch with a good run-out. Begin your descent in a wedge just as you would in Alpine. When you’re comfortable with a straight wedge start making wedge turns. As your skis cross the fall line pull the uphill foot back three to six inches taking note of the dorsi-flexion in the uphill ankle as well as the flexion of the M.T.P. joint. Start the next turn with both feet and repeat the process in the other direction. Remember to weight both feet as evenly as possible. Move through both the wedge Christie and basic parallel sequences in the same
manner. When you’re comfortable with the aforementioned sequence, or you’re an accomplished Classic Cross-Country skier, begin to create turn shapes using shuffling motions or diagonal stride motions. As your confidence builds hold a Telemark position through the turns shaping phase (rounder turns are harder to perform on XC skis).

Note: If you are using a snowsport area’s downhill facilities, lift passes and some type of ski retention device will be required.

Through Pistol Pete Bigfords encouragement, I discovered a glaring deficiency in my Telemark skiing. Although the new Alpine world shoveled earth on Telemark’s premature grave at the turn of the last century it has been responsible for many of the technological breakthroughs that make Telemarking accessible to the masses. Joined at the hip by all but one fundamental, the lead change, Alpine and Telemark have much in common, however the natural movements of the lead change is the fundamental that ties Telemark to Nordic Skiing. I encourage all serious Telemark skiers to take on a challenge, find a slope, click in skinny skis and explore Telemarks roots!

“You’ve got this.”

Bradferd L. Miller

PSIA-AASI C Nordic Education Staff; Telemark Level 3, Alpine Level 3, Cross Country Level 2, and Children’s specialist Level 2

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PSIA-AASI Telemark Technical Manual
Dave and Linda “Murph” Jacobs for spirited discussion and support of PSIA-AASI
In Memory of Mr. Vojin Baic, a Cross-Country giant who touched thousands of young athletes lives regardless of their discipline or background.

Brad’s cartoon drawing can be found on the back page of this issue.

Five Time’s the Charm

By Ron Shepard

The role of “Executive Director,” by title alone is somewhat daunting- if you are the person sitting in the chair. Well over 3000 members see my signature on emails, and at the top of articles. I receive your event feedback, your exam scores, many of your phone calls. I enjoy your compliments, and always seek to address your complaints. I accepted this job with a mandate from the board to resolve the challenges which they identified in customer service and in fiscal management. In the words of one board member “you’ve been a pretty harsh critic Ron- let’s see if you can fix things with the same enthusiasm with which you’ve griped.”

I’m fairly far into my second season now, with a great team in place and an awesome alliance with the representatives at PSIA-AASI’s National Office. I have seen the board manage some major changes to our division’s practices, and our new exam process is getting positive reviews from members and staff alike.

Still, I’m bound to stumble, destined to fall on occasion — here’s how I know:

I failed my Level III exam four times (maybe five-the record is a little vague). If you count individual tryout events, I failed to make the Intermountain Education Staff on 6 separate occasions. One evaluator asked why I kept trying — “Didn’t I get it that I was NEVER going to be hired?”

That was the year I made it onto the Intermountain Education Staff. I tried harder, I worked more, I internalized the feedback I was given. I succeeded, and then I made it onto the Intermountain “squad” to try out for the National Team. I didn’t make that. On two occasions I didn’t make it onto the Alpine Team, but I gave it my best efforts.

I’m pretty sure you see my point, but I’ll go there anyway: At some point in my Level III journey, I could have given up. At some point in my education staff journey, I could have followed the advice given, and quit.

I’m not saying that where I am today is “all that (and a bag of chips),” but I wouldn’t be here if I gave into frustration, or gave up on myself.

“Success is achieved and maintained by those who try and keep trying.”

— W. Clement Stone
“Twenty-two months old and my daughter’s first half pipe run!” That was the Instagram post which I shared that day. Of course, by “halfpipe,” I was referring to the walls from our walkout basement. That and her snowboard was powered by Dad. She was relying mostly on me for balance. To us, we were riding a superpipe!

Over my 9 years of teaching, I have taught a lot of young boarders to stand sideways on a snowboard. So, I was quite excited to have the chance to teach one of my own.

It all started on Christmas morning 2017, and felt like a scene from the Christmas Story. Dad waited until all the presents were opened to save the best for last. The eyes of my eight month old daughter opened wide when she saw that it was a Burton Riglet Board. Ninety cm in length, twin shape with a flat top flex, riglet reel and a grippy top! Not to mention sweet graphics with a spaceman on it!

Right away, we started pulling her around the living room in a seated position on the board. Not much really progressed the first winter since she was barely crawling.

Next fall, however, I busted the ole riglet board out to reintroduce her to an old friend. At first, she wasn’t too thrilled to take a ride on the board. Mom and Dad would try to pull each other around to show her how much fun it was. It would interest her for a minute, but she was not overly excited.

I asked myself how can I get her interested without pushing it too much? What does she like? Toys!! So, of course, I placed the board next to the toy bin so that it stayed in the “fun zone.” I would bust it out here and there and pull it around etc. Still, I did not have much success. At this time, she really liked baby dolls, so I had an idea. I put her baby on the board, and I started pulling it around until I felt a little added weight. Was it Miss Adeline, is or did I just hook the kitchen table? I looked back and saw nothing but smiles. Soon after we were back in action taking all her friends for rides.

Next step, how do I get her to stand? Once again, Mom and Dad would try to show her how to do it, and she would try it for a second with little success. One day, we
The Examiner Exchange Program

The Examiner Exchange Program, which took place in April 2019, as Central Division members may be aware, was a big success. Central Division Education Staff members Erika Meier and Logan Price had the opportunity to shadow Level II Examinations, each in a different division.

Please scan the Bar Code on the right for a link to the Examiner Exchange Program article. The article has been posted on the Central Division Web Page, under “Latest Updates.”
Something Old, Something New & Something Borrowed
A statement caught my attention during the Executive Director interview process a couple years ago, “I’m a what if person!”
Ron Shepard’s statement resonated with me for several days following the interview. What if we all looked at things from a different angle? What if we could institute positive change? What if other divisions could help us? What if members are an integral part of positive change?
Educationally speaking, “What ifs” yielded Success in 2019 with something old, something new and something borrowed.

Something Old
Freestyle Specialist One has been offered in Central for several years however has been slow to gain traction. “What if we reached out to Alpine members?” “What if we could incorporate freestyle components in discipline specific teaching sequences?” And, “What if we brought in National team members like David Oliver to facilitate FS events?”
By answering important “What ifs,” Freestyle Specialist is on the rise.

Something New
Although Women specific clinics are not new, Women specific Telemark clinics in Central are. Women’s Telemark participation numbers are increasing in Central and through their “What if,” Telemark Icon Patti Banks journeyed to Central this past March. A filled-to-capacity Ladies Telemark clinic proved a great success capped off by the group’s planning for the 2020 season.

Something Borrowed
Central’s new Senior Specialist 1 program started as a “What if” from a member leading to the creation of a multi-discipline committee including members-at-large. “What if we asked other divisions for help?” Acting on the aforementioned “What if,” Executive Committe member Julie Nitzsche built a relationship with NW Specialist Guru Kim Petram and was given permission to borrow NW’s Senior Specialist program. To date, Senior Specialist clinics have exceeded expectations which include double booking at many program sites.

Your “What ifs” have made a big difference so far in 2019. Constructive communication and involvement have provided solid program foundations. If you have a “What If,” let us know, and remember “we’re in this together.”

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Educational Corner:
Exploring the “What If” Factor
By Brad Miller, PSIA-AASI C Education Vice President

2019 Cascade Mountain Event, Portage, Wisconsin


Mordor, Gandalf, Flying Squirrel, Grumpy Bear; Do these sound like characters from a mystic novel??

Perhaps, but actually they are the names of runs located on Mount Bohemia in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I, along with my trusty sidekick, Oleg Rankov, led a very gritty and determined group of members and non-members during our inaugural event here at BoMo. This place is awesome! We were faced with some of the most difficult skiing conditions which I have ever experienced. Not only was the snow deep, wet, and heavy, it was sticky and unyielding as well. The runs were steep and the bumps were big, even by western standards. We skied in the rain and fog, having a great time.

Our focus wasn’t on any specific type of turn or style, instead, we surveyed the run and tried to figure out how we could best shape our intended path of travel. We had to blend retraction turns with hop turns, stem turns with one footed pivot slips. It was fun to be challenged like that. The margin of error was zero. We learned some tactical line choices for the bumps like “green line” and “blue line” and worked to apply our technical abilities to combine the two.

Mount Bohemia is a cool, free spirited kind of place, with a fantastic vibe. There are named runs but most of the area (80%) is open glades with rock outcroppings and chutes. I could not believe the amount of snow on the ground. The resort received nearly 276” of snow to date this season. They have two chairs for accessing the front of the mountain, but the cool part was this hip little bus system that would pick you up beyond the lift served areas and return you to the base. We never waited more than two minutes for a bus. The base facilities were very modest, but cozy. There is a small log lodge bar area adjacent to a huge hot tub. A short distance away is a small yurt community housing the cafeteria, another bar, and us. Yes, we slept in yurts. The yurts were clean and comfortable providing a warm and inviting atmosphere in which to hang out. Each yurt has its own bathroom and shower, which, were also clean.

We are already in the planning stages for next year’s event. The plan is to offer a two-day event with an optional cat skiing excursion on nearby VooDoo Mountain. The cat skiing groups get around 13,500 vertical feet of trackless powder per day!! It’s great to see such a wonderful resort right here in the Midwest. Don’t be surprised to see a future Bohemia “off-piste day” as a requirement for certification. Hopefully you will take a chance and join us next year at Mount Bohemia. It’s really exciting and something you just need to experience for yourself.

By John Hamaker

Mount Bohemia is Ready For You!
This year’s Spring Rally & Symposium at Sun Valley, Idaho was a great success—over 450 members from multiple divisions experienced Sun Valley—with the resort’s legendary, long and consistent drops, awesome fields of spring bump skiing, and Apres-Ski time on the deck in true Sun Valley style. The response from Central participants has been enthusiastic—everyone loved the chance to explore a resort they had so often heard about.

The symposium—a joint effort event where divisional education staff lead clinics with mixed-division participants is unique in that it challenges staff to present at a level of greater visibility than occurs at local events. Similarly, members had the chance to hear concepts through the interpretation of other divisions (often subtle, but valuable nuances).

The participants at Sun Valley represented a range of abilities and certifications, many groups had current and former divisional ed staff as participants, gaining their “outside education credits” — and that is a lot of pressure on a clinic leader!

Central Clinician Chad Poepping was surprised to find that his clinic was attended by George Thomas — the host of the PSIA-AASI “Last Chair” podcasts. You can listen to Chad’s interview by following Last Chair podcasts using the Soundcloud app. Central will return to Symposium in 2022, and we hope you’ll put it on your calendar as a must-do event.

Realizing the value “resort-awareness” brings to our customers, PSIA-AASI Central is offering a series of events throughout the West this coming season, and we think you’ll find them quite attractive. Dubbed “Central Soujourns,” up to 8 members (per location) can travel to one of several western resorts where Central Education staff currently work. Deer Valley and Park City, Utah, Breckenridge, Loveland, Vail and Keystone, Colorado — at each location a Central Education staff member will provide an educational tour of the resort, with tips and tricks on navigation and terrain access. Most venues include lift tickets, and the event cost is just $168 per member for two days and 12 CEU’s. Want more event opportunities? We’re planning a late-season trip to Mammoth Mountain, California next season — because Mammoth is also a Must-See Resort.

We hope you’ll find these continuing education options refreshing and engaging.
For many of us our only exposure to other ski instructors outside the United States is from the information that our national representatives bring back every four years from Interski. Relating to our diverse students requires a wealth of experience. The more experience we have outside our normal routine generally expands our capacity to relate to students. You might believe that there is only one way to teach skiing and that could be true when you are testing, but ultimately biomechanics, psychology and snow physics narrows the options.

I recently had the extreme pleasure of skiing with members of Ski School Colfosco, in Italy. First off, I was humbled by the member’s high level of skiing excellence. For example, on instructor named Heidi demonstrated to me a “passing” example of a medium radius turn. Her demo wasn’t only technically perfect, she did it with such a nuanced and elegant style that she moved far beyond the sport of skiing to the “art of skiing.” She told me that the goal of the ski school members is to ski “molto elegante” or very elegant ... it sounds even better in Italian.

The Ski School in Colfosco is associated with the Provincial Chamber of the Professional Ski Instructors in South Tyrol (TUULS) and has roughly 50 active members. It is led by Snowsports School Director Werner Costa. Each instructor is proudly promoted with their photo on a poster that hangs in every hotel and restaurant in town. Most of the instructors speak four languages: Italian, German, English and Ladinish. Ladinish is the local language spoken by natives of South Tyrol. Whatever your native language, these talented instructors are experts at communicating visually and verbally with their students. In our hotel, there was a German woman who specifically and repeatedly requested an instructor who didn't speak German but could demonstrate skills in a way that she visually understood. Sometimes as instructors what we do is more important than what we say.

I observed two wonderful examples of instructors describing skiing movements. One was how to ski bumps by describing to students that they should wipe the top side of moguls with their skis as if smearing Nutella on white bread. “You must be gentle so you don’t tear the bread”. Another descriptive
Paoli Peaks Instructors

Alyssa Dupuis, a snowboard instructor at Mount Ripley.
Photo credits and thanks to Kyle Wehmanen.
Bus ride at Mount Bohemia.
example I observed was focused on how to encourage a student to move their Center of Mass to the inside of the new turn as “Tauchen” (Diving). “We can dive off the front, angled off the corner or straight off the side of a diving board into the swimming pool. We can do the same into our new turns.” I tried this visual description with my students later at Breckenridge and it translated very well.

The Tyrolian ski pedagogy is very similar to what PSIA teaches. They also have fundamentals of skiing but only four. All five fundamentals are included within their four fundamentals. In their system they combine Number 2. “Control the pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski.” And Number 3. “Control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation.” This may be due to their strong racing heritage. From what I observed inclination is almost nonexistent in their students who are, instead, skiing with pressure directed to the outside ski primarily by angulation.

TUULS developed a Four Tier system (Green, Blue, Red and Black) of describing student skill level and those levels directly relate to an App for their smartphones. The App is called “Snowsport Video App,” which lists learning progressions and has “example videos” of the drills for children. Just like here in the United States a majority of their students are children. Something they do to make the experience more enjoyable and fun for the children is to transport them to and from the training area in a special Ski Train.

I encourage you to seek out opportunities to ski with and learn from others outside your local area. You never know what you might glean at a far away clinic from an instructor who has a different background and life experience than yours.

Let’s go dive into our turns.

Steve Ohms is a member of PSIA Central Division. He is a Level 2 PSIA-C Alpine Instructor and a National Ski Patrol Senior Patroller and Toboggan Instructor. When not volunteering with the Ski Patrol he is a member of the professional teaching staff at Breckenridge Peak 8, Adult Ski School in Breckenridge, Colorado.
SUBMISSIONS
Submissions, including articles and photos, are welcome. Articles should be emailed to garyski3@att.net in MS Word format with the following header: article name, date and author. Photos and graphics should be high resolution (300 dpi or greater and at least 2 inches in the smallest dimension) and submitted in JPEG or TIF format. A photo release must be obtained from any person(s) included in the submitted photo. Articles are accepted on the condition that they are released for use in all PSIA-AASI Central publications. PSIA-AASI Central reserves the right to edit all articles.

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PUBLICATION CALENDAR

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

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

All articles and photographs intended for publication in The Central Line should be submitted to the Editor.