Sugar Mountain Ski Resort opened on Halloween, Wednesday, October 31 for skiing and snowboarding. In its 43-year history, Sugar Mountain Resort’s earliest opening was on November 5th in 1976. The mega storm, Sandy at the end of October, pounded the East Coast with wind and rain, while bringing us wintery conditions in the North Carolina Mountains. Snowmaking began on Sunday, October 28th to help Mother Nature in covering the slopes with the white stuff.

But we can’t forget that November is a month for being thankful. We have all that we have because of someone else’s sacrifices. The official Thanksgiving Day is November 22, but we should be thankful everyday. When you are cruising down the slopes, how often do you say thank you to your body (your feet, your legs, your hips, your head, your heart and lungs and the whole works?) How often do you say thank you to your clothing, to your equipment that your life depends on? We complained for not having much snow last year, but how many of us were thankful for whatever we did have? How about a thank you to the mountain owners, managers, administrators, and all workers from snow-makers to parking attendants and everyone else without whom we would not be on the hill!? Just so I don’t get in trouble, I better tell you not to start running to the administration office with all your thank you’s. In our locker room it is posted that you might loose your job if you go to the Administration Office without our director Len. But, even if you don’t have a chance to say your thank you’s, you should show everyone your thankful heart. Live by setting a good and thankful example.

Among many things, I am very thankful that our Peak Performance is not only reaching distant places in the world, but it is getting a great recognition. I want to thank all our authors, some local and others from far away, for helping to make Peak Performance a valuable information source and to stimulate and motivate our readers. It is our goal to promote the snow sports to the best of our abilities. I encourage you to continue sharing this publication with whoever you see it fit. Check out all previous issues of Peak Performance that are posted and downloadable from my web page found at www.mathsci.appstate.edu/~wak/ and never hesitate to write me at Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net. Have a super autumn and have a very meaningful and blessed Thanksgiving that will make a memory in your life.
Main Course

USSA’s Investment in “Good Skiing”

By Peter Kray

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The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) has made several important investments in the last few years, from the Center of Excellence, its national training and education center in Park City, Utah, to the downhill training center in Copper Mountain, Colorado.

But with the recent hire of the PSIA Alpine Team’s Michael Rogan as fundamental skills development coach, the USSA is now investing in the very building blocks of good skiing.

“We have been building programs that dive deeper and deeper into development, but still realized that with all of the focus on racing gates, maybe there wasn’t enough focus on what good skiing is, especially in regards to creating better fundamental skills,” said Luke Bodensteiner, USSA executive vice president of athletics. “Bringing Mike in will not only help us establish good fundamentals, but also send the message to race programs across the country that this is important.”

Bodensteiner said that in recent evaluations of top up-and-coming racers from across the country, even some of the kids who were fastest in the gates were still “pretty deficient” with regard to the fundamentals. With all of the focus on going fast, they may have “raced” by some of the basic building blocks needed to establish good skills.

Rogan says that by going back to basics to improve their skills, even the most promising young racers will be able to progress more quickly. “When the stakes are high and you have to react, you always go with your instincts,” Rogan says. “You have to make sure that your instincts are correct to keep you safe and fast. At racing speeds the consequences are high; there is no time to think about technique so the technique has to be right.”

Rogan will also help the USSA complete the rollout of its SkillsQuest program, which is designed to help coaches motivate and reward athletes for working on the fundamentals.

Of course, on the PSIA Alpine Team, he will be looking at many of those same issues, but with a focus on every style of skiing. From big mountain, to halfpipe, to racing gates or just enjoying a morning groomer, much of the team’s focus in the coming term involves the building blocks of good skiing—for any kind of skier, in any kind of terrain.

“It’s based on the idea that the building blocks don’t change, but what we want to do with the tool—or, as we’ve seen with the rapid pace of ski design innovation, the tool itself—may change,” says PSIA Alpine Team Member Jeb Boyd. “So it’s really about executing those building blocks to then able to produce the desired outcome.”

In either venue, Rogan says he can’t wait to continue to address the “good skiing” question. “Anytime a passionate teacher gets to work with passionate learners it is a chance for something magical to happen,” he says. “The opportunity to work for the USST and PSIA at the same time strengthens the bond between these two organizations.”

Peak Performance
Saying Goodbye to Fear

By Rick Schnellmann

Fear can hold you back from enjoying your skiing. How do you gain the freedom to learn to ski steeps, bumps, trees, and maybe even just learn to ski the blue runs in a relaxed and happy way?

It’s a beautiful winter’s morning. The crisp air tickles your nose. Snow crystals sparkle on pine boughs, as if delighting in the caress of the warm rays raining down from a deep blue sky. It’s one of those wondrous days that so clearly define why you love this sport. Skiing your favorite run on a perfect carpet of white, you feel at one with the mountain, your skis sliding effortlessly over the snow as they blaze a perfect path down the trail. With a sense of euphoria engulfing you, you venture out, anxious to revel in new terrain. You find ankle deep powder, a gift from the night, and float down the mountain as though weightless in flight. Small bumps and wide trees come up on your path, and you slide in amongst them like friends from the past. Peace and fulfilment permeate your soul, and you imagine nothing better could possibly be.

But then, as if rudely awakened from a glorious dream, the spell is broken. Peeking over the edge of an old nemesis trail, you find a wind blown steep screaming treacherous intent. Those sparkling crystals that looked so beautiful in the morning trees have found new life in what appears to be a deadly sheet of ice just daring you to step afoot. Your focus locks on the bottom of this terrifying face, which seems thousands of feet below, and your mind pictures a bone-crushing tumble all the way down.

As you gaze in terror, you feel your limbs stiffen with fear. A thought echoes in you head, “just go, you can ski this”, but the more you contemplate pushing off, the more desperate your anxiety grows, and the more you body turns rigid. The euphoria that filled your morning is gone, suddenly replaced by a panic driven desire to take off your skis and crawl to the safety of the lodge.

How did this happen? Where did this debilitating fear so suddenly come from? Fear is a natural human response to perceived danger. It’s healthy, it keeps us alive. Skiing by its very nature is a sport that tests the boundaries between thrill and terror. It’s the very thing that draws us to it. Sliding down a mountainside on nothing but a pair of slippery planks provides a rush of adrenalin that many find to be addictive fun. A little taste of fear that heightens our senses, and funnels our attention to the wind in our face and the trees streaking by.

Yes, in small doses the fear is fun, it’s what keeps us coming back to the slopes. But everyone has a threshold where the level of fear present overwhelms the fun. Where that threshold lies differs between individuals. Some have a very large tolerance for danger, they seek it out. Others enjoy their thrills in moderation. They hold health and survival in tall regard.

These individual personality traits come quite well intact. There’s not much that can be done to transform a cautious Carl into an extreme sports adrenalin junky. But that’s perfectly OK. There’s actually a lot to be said for...
the wisdom of prudence. Pushing through fear can actually take you into dangerous situations. The mind is often quite adept at accurately determining what the body is equipped to deal with, and what it’s not. Disregarding its advice can subject one to challenges they don’t have the skills to cope with. Way too often injuries arise when a companion prompts a friend to ski on terrain where they don’t belong, or at speeds they’re not ready for. Even when injury is avoided, pushing through the fear often results in a terrifying experience that simply intensifies that fear in the mind of the skier, making the thought of tackling that terrain or that speed again seem even more intimidating.

So what to do? If pushing though the fear doesn’t work, how will you ever overcome it? How will you transcend the anxiety that currently bars you from experiencing the expert terrain and higher speeds that some skiers seem to enjoy so much? There is a way, and it doesn’t require you to raise your tolerance for danger, or subject yourself to undue risk. Rather, it allows you to temper your fear by confronting the problem from a different angle.

Fear erupts when the mind senses the body is ill equipped to handle the challenge that lies before it. The problem is easily resolved by simply arming the body with a better set of tools for the job. By building your skills you expand your abilities to ski more difficult terrain. Suddenly, what the mind considered dangerous, it now knows the body has the ability to handle, so it relaxes. Thresholds of what once was considered intimidating, elevate. That steep slope that always appeared to be a cliff to you mysteriously seems more gentle of pitch. Speeds that once seemed deadly now feel surprisingly tame.

Sure, I hear you, “that all sounds great, magical even, but is it reality? Can we really experience such a monumental transformation in our perception of what constitutes danger?” You bet!

We all have what I call a comfort zone. If traveling under a certain speed, on a certain type of terrain, and in a particular state of balance we feel comfortable. We know we have the capability to turn or slow down as needed, so we feel secure. But that fleeting sense of security can quickly fade. If something jars us outside the limited parameters of our current comfort zone, our ability to control our descent down the mountain is suddenly compromised. Even our ability to remain standing comes into
question. We instinctively fear being jostled out of our personal comfort zone, so our mind strives to avoid situations that it knows from experience it’s likely to happen. That could include steeper terrain, ice, moguls, and various forms of non-groomed snow.

The answer is to expand your comfort zone. If you only feel comfortable when center balanced on your skis, change that. Learn to ski confidently whether balanced fore, center or aft, on your inside or outside ski. Learn to move back and forth from one balance state to another, at any moment you choose. Just developing those new balance skills will dramatically expand the size of your comfort zone, and cause your confidence to soar. Suddenly you’ll be skiing with the self-assurance of knowing no matter what state of balance the terrain may thrust you into, you can handle it. A long held fear just fades away.

Learning how to use turn shape to manage your speed is another powerful tool. How sharply you turn, and how long you keep turning, has significant influence on how fast you travel down the mountain. And when turn shape alone does not provide all the speed control you desire, learning to govern how much skid you inject into your turns completes the package. With the added capability to manage your skid you’ll have the ability to ski any trail, with any turn shape, at any speed you find comfortable. You’ll be able to speed up or slow down at any moment you like.

Just knowing you have these new skills sets the mind at ease. Speed becomes less intimidating because you know you can bleed some off at any moment you choose. If the terrain ejects you from your preferred state of balance, it’s of little consequence, because you have the skills to ski comfortably in that altered balance state. And if a quick change of direction is called for, you know you have the turn shape and edging skills you need to execute it.

These new skills are learned and accumulated block by block, on easy terrain, in a non-intimidating manner. There’s no need to confront your fears or push your panic threshold. Each new skill you learn simply serves to elevate the point at which that threshold is encountered. Without ever having to approach your threshold, you build your skills and gradually find more and more advanced skiing situations enjoyable. Suddenly one day it dawns on you that you’re skiing much faster than you ever did before, on steeper terrain than you dared to in the past, and are thoroughly enjoying the experience.
Yes, there is a very pleasant formula for saying goodbye to your current fears, and contrary to what many think it’s a pleasant journey. The Building Blocks Instructional Series teaches all the skills you need to make it happen. With those skills developed, the fears that have imposed limits on your experiences on snow fade away, and a window opens to a new understanding of what skiing can be.

Rick Schnellmann was a long time race coach who produced countless FIS level athletes. He’s now shifted his focus to helping recreational skiers develop the same fundamental skills that all the best racers in the world use to achieve their success. Rick has produced a series of instructional DVD’s that sell around the world, conducts on snow camps, and operates the Skier Village online community. Find his instructional products at www.YourSkiCoach.com, and drop in to chat with him at www.SkierVillage.com.

It Can’t be Ridden if it’s Hidden

By Gordon Carr
PSIA-E Alpine, Level II

There, I’ve done it! I’ve finally found a way to title an article to reflect the fond regard and respect I have for my snowboarding colleagues at Sugar Mountain. The title could equally well have been ‘YOU CAN’T SKI IT IF YOU DON’T SEE IT!’ That said, let’s get on with it.

In my brief time at Sugar Mountain Ski and Snowboard School, I’ve been struck by the number of skiing guests who come for a private lesson to brush up on current skills and learn new skills because they are taking a ski vacation to a large destination resort out west. They seem to have intuitive sense that current skills may need augmentation to ski effectively the huge terrain at mega mountains. I’ve even had several Learn-To-Ski couples, about to marry, who have chosen a mega resort for their honeymoon like Whistler/Blackcomb! So much for the honeymoon.

Certainly these guests will enjoy their vacations more if they have more than minimum skills for skiing or riding when they get to their destination, and we, here, at Sugar Mountain can help them improve. But there is other knowledge, rarely challenged here at Sugar Mountain, with which most of our Southern guests will be unfamiliar. I refer to the burning cold time and how to ski comfortably in sub-zero temperatures. Also, reflecting the title, we can coach them on how to ski or ride more safely in significantly reduced visibility, again, something not frequently challenged when they ski or ride with us.

First the issue of staying warm: I have a little ditty to remind me what to tell such guests headed to high altitude and temperatures which they may never have experienced: the Three Ws….Wind, Warmth, and Wicking. WIND
is the thief of the natural layer of thermal warmth surrounding the body. I tell guests you must have with you at all times on big mountains an outer layer parka or shell which is wind proof. Yeah…skiing or riding in just a fancy sweater or fleece looks like the cool pictures we sometimes see in slick, glossy magazines, but people new to our great winter sport rarely appreciated that the “way cool” shot of the models has been “staged” on the perfect day, and usually these people are not moving. Even on the best, calm, sunny day, the moment you start down the slopes, your own movement creates a “wind” which is relentlessly warming itself through your outer garments trying to steal your body core warmth.

WARM: Along with wearing an outer wind proof shell is the absolute necessity of a head covering! Scientists slightly disagree as to the amount of heat lost through radiant cooling from your head, but ONLY slightly. Estimates range from 60 – 80% of your body heat is lost through an exposed scalp. If you get hot and sweaty, take off your hat briefly; if your hands or feet are cold, make sure your hat is on! Helmets are warmer than any other hat, at least any hat you would care to be seen in at a trendy destination resort. Reputable ski parkas are really great at blocking this heat robbing wind, but so is a quality shell combined with LAYERS of fleece which you can add or remove for warmth as daily temperatures and your exertion levels vary. I have been sweating my skin off in February at Alta by mid-morning when I dressed for the early morning below zero temps and didn’t dress for the removal of layers to accommodate the morning sun and rising temps. Layering provides options. Our Southern guests don’t get the opportunity when skiing or riding with us at Sugar Mountain to “test” their gear for truly brutal temperatures. It just doesn’t get that cold here, so what we tell them about how to stay warm can make or break that ‘honeymoon’ to Breckenridge.

The layers in their WARMTH system should either be fleece or wool, but in either case, the good stuff. Heat loss studies have shown that two layers of R-2 fleece are warmer than one garment of R-4 fleece because of the additional layer of dead air between the two garments. If you are partial to wool, it is still the best natural fiber which retains your heat, even when wet, and the new merino wool has removed the “itch”! Caroline (my better half and don’t feel sorry for her…it was her idea!) and I once took a dog sled trip in the far north of Maine for a week one January when night temperatures plummeted to −44 degrees. We stayed in walled tents for comfort! But the daytime highs were a balmy −25 to −20 degrees! I only wore mid-weight capilene underwear and WW II Austrian winter weight wool combat fatigues. Interestingly the britches had a special extra wind proof panel in the front of the thighs and crotch…a layer of good old 1st generation crinkly plastic. Even then scientists knew wind was the thief of body heat!

WICKING is probably the most important element of the ‘staying warm’ system. NO COTTON NEXT TO THE SKIN…period…end! Not usually a problem for ladies, but most men wear cotton briefs or shorts, and cotton absorbs sweat. The cold, clammy, sweaty knickers on the bottom half of your core can make for a miserable day. The modern, hi-tech fabrics have it all figured out…hydrophilic (attracts moisture) fabric next to your skin to draw the sweat away from your skin and transport it out a layer or two to hydrophobic (repels moisture) fabrics where the water vapor can escape through a modern wind proof, waterproof, BUT breathable shell or parka. It is a bit more dynamically complex than this…vapor pressure gradients, dispersal factors, etc., but these are the basic principles. (See also the article in September’s Peak Performance about waterproof, breathable fabrics.) Also, people tend to buy the base layer of these miracle fabrics in their normal size, which is probably too big and sloppy. You want the base layer next to your skin to be skin tight and hugging your every curve. If the fabric doesn’t contact the skin, there is a layer of air between you and the hydrophilic fabric trying to move the sweat moisture away from your core, and that air layer defeats the purpose. The base layer fabric is much more efficient if it touches the skin. I buy my base layer 1 size smaller than usual T-shirts or polo shirts. The snugness feels good and these modern fabrics are stretchy. So…for the guests going north or west and up into altitude for a winter vacation for the first time, let them know about WIND…WARMTH…and…WICKING.

Even though this will make the article unnecessarily long, I have to get this point in! Given the poor snow year last year, I just wanted everyone to know I have not been sitting down on the job. ULL (sometimes spelled ULLR), the son of THOR in Old Norse creation legends was the god of snow and skiing! I have rooted around and dug out my old ULL Helmet, saved for just such emergencies, and have been performing some fancy, high-
steppin’ moves in my back yard. Not-with-standing some big eyed stares from neighbors, I’m sure these dance steps, passed down through generations, will deliver a great snow year. Ya’ll get to work also!

Now to the “Visibility Issue” for which this article was titled. Other weather related conditions which all beginning and most advanced Southern skiers and riders, who have not previously been out west or much further north, will not have experienced, relates to visibility. Anyone who has not experienced “white out” when on a really big mountain with a complex trail system, cannot understand or believe how disorienting it can be to be caught in zero visibility. Reduced visibility can lead to vertigo where you can totally misread verticality and where your kinesthetic feedback system is so confused that you can feel like you are on a flat part of the trail when in fact it is moderately steep! You can “believe” you know where you are on the mountain and in fact make very serious errors in position judgment which can lead to very dangerous decisions and behavior. My comment to inexperienced guests heading for the “big ones” is that if you experience white-out, move to the side of the trail, and call the Ski Patrol if possible or beg a “local” to assist you to the base. Waiting for the white-out to clear, is a strategy, but only if it is early in the day and the weather is not seriously severe. White-outs do change, sometimes almost instantly, but you DO NOT want to get caught on a big mountain in reduced visibility towards the close of day.

Additional loss of visual cues, although not totally disorienting, such as due to very heavy snow fall or fog can also make skiing or riding very dangerous. Here too, our inexperienced guests can benefit from some pointers on goggles. DON’T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THEM! Goggles are warm and combined with neckups can avoid frostbite in really cold conditions. But more importantly, goggle lenses can improve contrast and improve trail feature definition in reduced visibility. All those sporty colors in goggles really do have specific functions. Following is a list of lens colors and situations in which they provide the most benefit. YELLOW provides hi intensity vision and is best used in low light and even at night. It doesn’t, however, enhance contrast and definition as much as some other lens shades. CLEAR provides NO visual augmentation, is only for warmth and protection of your eyes against wind and snow particle damage and is useful at night. AMBER is very useful in low light conditions and is excellent in providing contrast as it blocks the blue wavelengths, of which snow and ice have a lot. VERMILLION is useful in low light, provides a high intensity visual field and enhances contrast. ROSE COPPER is good in mid to bright light, blocks light transmission and provides contrast. BROWN and GREY block light much like traditional sunglasses so are good in bright sunlight conditions. BROWN provides a bit more contrast, but GREY preserves natural colors a bit more. Any polarized lens enhances definition and contrast by reducing glare reflection. Some of the high-end goggle brands now have easily interchangeable lenses to accommodate changing climatic conditions. When it is snowing heavily or in a partial white-out, the lenses which provide contrast really assist in anticipating alterations in trail features which can make the difference between completing a run by the “skin of your teeth” or actually enjoying the run.

Most of our guests heading out west, with the caveats mentioned above, also can benefit from some “tactical” suggestions. Just like in driving (which Witold is featuring as a lateral learning analogue for skiing and riding dynamics and tactics, in an ongoing series of articles) when visibility deteriorates, NUMERO UNO….SLOW DOWN! Remember the article I wrote about speed of neural impulses, reaction times and the distance your skis and boards travel in 1 second even at recreational speeds? You are always balancing into the future and your brain is making instantaneous assessments for future muscular reactions to trail features. When you can’t see “the future” trail and are even having trouble seeing the tips of your skis or board, you simply cannot anticipate terrain features fast enough to safely travel at speed. Just slow down!
A few other tactical tricks can be passed on to our guests. When skiing or riding in reduced visibility with a group, (and on big mountains you should never ski alone) pick the two strongest riders in the group, and let them lead, trading off the lead position from time to time. If you have ever been this leader in a white-out or heavy snow storm, you’ll remember just how exhausting it is to be in the lead. Go slowly and have people follow as closely as is safely possible. This has some risk, but is probably less dangerous than everybody going off on their own. Just go slowly, talk, whistle, sing, whine, make noise, maybe scream?, so the following people can add hearing cues to vision in trying to follow. Also, when possible ski closely enough to the trail side to see trees. They provide a visual point of reference for verticality and greatly reduce disorientation. Beginners don’t like to ski the sides of trails because a failed or miscued turn on the tree side, they think, is Armageddon waiting to happen….beginners like the middle of trails. Even for beginners not going to the big ones, I like to divide the trail width into thirds and help beginners get comfortable with both outside thirds, telling them why (the snow is better on the outsides away from the scrapped off middle section). They quickly get the point which will prepare them for their future skiing journeys.

A final sidebar, but one apropos to impaired vision; imagine the blind and severely visually impaired skiers and riders we have in our sport. If you don’t really believe we are “visual” primates and heavily dependent upon what we “see” to let us move comfortably, blindfold yourself and pick a very trusted friend to talk-guide you down a very familiar and GENTLE trail. It will bring home two points: our visually impaired colleagues are the most courageous people imaginable; and, reduced visibility really does make your skills deteriorate. I don’t know if this is OK for training at our mountain, but I have done this blindfold exercise several times, and EVERY person, regardless of skill level, reverted to wedge or wedge Christie turns in this exercise. That old tricycle stance just feels more stable and slow. Anyhow, there are many bits of knowledge and tactical skills which we can give our ‘traveling’ guests for their snow trip of a lifetime. When they face the conditions I’ve described, they will thank their lucky stars they came to us at Sugar Mountain before their trip. And I believe, because of your genuine concern shown by the information you have given them, they will be very likely to come back to us; back to us at Sugar Mountain where they can ski and ride in our Carolina Blue Sky at the greatest mountain in the South!

NOW GET BUSY AND THINK SNOW

Cross-Training

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III

We simply cannot say enough about cycling, in particular road cycling. Cycling is probably the skiers’ and riders’ closest friend. There are so many benefits to cycling, and so much of it translates directly to snow sports. But, now being November, should cycling be done away with to make room for on-snow sports? Definitely not! It is not too late to get on the bike and stay on the bike. A few years ago I had a rule for myself – as long as my water bottle did not freeze up and the roads were clear enough, I had no reason to stay off the bike. As many of you know, last 4 years (due to my health issues,) I could not practice what I preached. But, this year will be different. So, it is all back to the bottle. Colder the weather, shorter the ride, but it is still there.

The list of benefits of cycling is long. Here is a partial list:

* **Cycling is cheap and good for the environment.** Biking does not use fossil fuels, creates no air or noise pollution, reduces traffic congestion, makes parking easier, has greater maneuverability
and access to both roads, paths and sidewalks. There is less financial cost to the user as well as society (negligible damage to roads, and less pavement required). Bikes can be relatively inexpensive with practically no maintenance. (Tires are the biggest costs (other then the bike itself.). Mine are $75 per tire that will last me 2,000 – 3,000 miles depending if it is front or rear.)

- **Cycling is one of the easiest ways to exercise.** You can ride many places at any time of the year. You don’t need any special technique and once you learn how to, you never forget it. You can do it alone or in a group.
- **Cycling is good for the body.** It builds overall strength and tones the muscles. It provides great cardiovascular workout with no pounding and jarring of the body, with little risk of over exercise or strain. Regular cycling strengthens leg muscles and is great for the mobility of hip and knee joints. Cycling builds stamina. Since it uses your largest muscle groups, it can raise your heartbeat very quickly and improve your overall fitness.
- **Cycling eats up calories.** It is a good way to lose those unwanted pounds. Since cycling helps build muscle, it will also boost your metabolic rate long after you have finished your ride.
- **Cycling improves your overall health.** You will become more resistant and get sick less often. You will sleep better and eat better.
- **Cycling improves coordination.** Cycling involves the whole body, therefore improving arm-to-leg, feet-to-hands and body-to-eye coordination.
- **Cycling reduces stress.** Here is a common saying: “Any regular exercise can reduce stress and depression and improve well being and self esteem. Cycling outdoors is also a good way to be one with nature and to feel the breath of the earth. It takes one’s mind out of everyday-life stress and rejuvenates the soul.” It will also supply your body with all the vitamin D that it needs.

**Cycling is a great humbling sport.** Being humbled is good for the soul and definitely builds the character. Here are some common experiences for most cyclists. I lived through most of these listed below, and some even more then once. Can you relate to any of these?

- You drop your front wheel into a road drain, cattle guards, edge of pavement, into railroad tracks. You hit an edge of a curb with your front wheel or you hit a wheel of a cyclist in front of you.
- You hit a curb with your pedal, or you hit the pavement with your pedal while cornering.
- You fear slow passing vehicles. They blow their (Maserati 5-tone) horns, dump their spit cups in your face, push you off the road, have dogs bark in your ear (taking several years off your life.)
- You fear fast passing cars as the bottles they throw out are next to deadly.
- Cars don’t realize how fast you are going (or maybe do it on purpose) and cut in front of you just so you splatter on their windshield and fall off on the other side of their hood (and they never stop as if nothing happened.)
• You look at your front wheel while climbing a hill and almost hit a runner that comes your way.
• On a blind corner you hit black ice, wet pavement, send, gravel, straw, wet leaves, pine needles, banana peels, etc.
• You have to climb a steep hill and wet leaves are everywhere. Or worse yet, you are going down a steep hill and wet leaves cover the ground.
• You move over to the side of the road to give car more space just to hit a rock or a pothole and get a flat.
• You wonder if now is the time to get a larger rear sprocket so hills are not as painful.
• You used to hope to tag up with another rider so you could show them who the boss is. Now when you meet another cyclist going your way, you change your route to avoid getting beat on the next hill.
• You are flying down the hill and lift up a bit to see if it is still clear just to have a small bird hit you in the chest.
• You eat pizza before a strenuous ride, and keep tasting it for hours to come.
• Your technician does not glue your tubular tire properly to the rim and it rolls off the rim on a tight corner. When the rim hits the pavement, so do you, just to wake up in the hospital.
• You count how many bones you have broken through the years from biking accidents.
• You used to pass other riders on an uphill, and now you can only pass them on a downhill.
• You laughed at other cyclists who did not unclip their foot from the pedal and fell between the cars at a stoplight. Next time you are riding zigzags up a very steep incline and you cut too sharp just so that you too can hit the pavement and find out how hard it is to unclip your feet from the pedals when lying sideways.
• Over the years you have experienced bees, yellow jackets and other flying objects going into your helmet, down your shirt, into your ears, mouth, nostrils and even get stuck between your glasses and your eyes.
• That darn dog always chases you up the hill and never down the hill.
• You pass by the redneck’s house whose dog thinks your leg would taste really good, and the owner sits on his run down porch with a rifle in his hands saying: “If you mess with my dog I will shoot you.”
• You blow your nose and get it to start bleeding, but keeping your heartbeat way up will not let your blood clot so you taste it for hours to come.
• When climbing a hill you finally come to a moment when you really need to switch to an easier gear, but by mistake you switch it to a higher one instead.
• You pass standing cars at a stoplight and then someone opens their door. Need I say more?
• You sweat, get rained on, hailed on, sprayed on, blown at, laughed at, screamed at. You get flat tires, you bust spokes, collapse your wheels, break handlebars, cranks, pedals, fork and/or chain stays. You lock your front break or catch a wire in the spokes. You loose grip with your handlebars. You ride through lightning, heavy downpours and scorching sun. The weather changes on you from summer to winter within a few miles.
• You squeezed break levers and nothing happened.
• You parked you new bike outside in the Florida sunshine and sun melted your saddle.
You were taking off your jacket while riding and one sleeve got caught in the rear wheel’s spokes. Or, your hands got caught in both sleeves behind you and you were on a downhill.

Your jersey’s zipper got stuck under your neck.

You do not change your hand position or your seat position causing parts of your body to go to sleep.

Far from home you run into a repaved road, which has loose gravel everywhere.

18-wheeler tries to suck you under, while passing you inches away. You resist with all your might, and then you are thrown off the road after the rear wheels go by you.

You forget that you are always on a collision course with wild animals. Deer do not look both ways before crossing the road!

You get to see first hand all that trash on the side of the road.

You feel like a “wild animal” with less and less quiet roads (territory) to bike on due to “progress.”

You feel like a “wild animal” because you feel safer in a pack (of riders.)

You make drivers feel like “wild animals” because you provoke their chase instinct. Drivers just have to pass cyclist no matter what the cost is.

Do I need to say any more???

Road cycling brings skiers, and riders alike, a lot of benefits to the table.

It makes you stronger. It tones your body and builds muscles that you really need for both of these sports. Not only core, but also shins and hamstrings, which greatly will improve your stance.

Builds efficient heart and lungs. Because of that, you can drop your heartbeat in a hurry when you stop or slow down your activity. You don’t perspire as much and you can handle higher elevations easier. Cycling lowers your resting heartbeat (mine is in the upper 30’s and I scare every physician that I visit.)

You learn how to read the snow’s surface better after you have been biking. You also recognize that different sides of the road has possibly a different surface, like one slope can have different conditions.

Your body moves can simulate skiing. Your core and head moving forward when cornering on a bike is the same as turning on your skis. Your arm position with elbows in front of your torso is also very similar.

Your long leg/short leg is obvious when cornering on your bike when the inside pedal is up. If the inside pedal is down, then your body position is similar to that when making “whitepass” turns on skis.

You can easily imagine that if both pedals were side by side, then pedaling over the top and back would resemble skiing moguls.

Just like on the skis, when you move slowly you need more rotary movements in the handlebars then when you go fast.

Biking helps you with improving your lateral balancing.

There are some other more obvious correlations:
1. On bike you also wear a helmet, gloves, eye protection and avoid falling.
2. You also have to obey posted signs and police officers (patrollers.)
3. You should not spit or blow your nose so the wind takes it on another person.
4. You learn to respect weather, apply sunscreen and believe in generous hydration.
5. You choose your equipment carefully.
6. You pick out your clothing carefully.
7. You tune your equipment regularly.
8. You build respect for others around you.
9. You don’t need license to do it.
10. The sport is addicting.
11. Biking (skiing/riding) gives you a break from cell phones, computers and snacking.
12. You get used to deep breathing (of cold air), get used to high pulse, and high speed.
13. When you start steeping on your bike pedals, it feels like you are running downhill.

BUT, on your bike you do not have to pay to go downhill.

**Ski Technique**

**Classroom Coaching**

By Ashley Cutrell

In preparation for the 2012 – 2013 season, the Appalachian State University Ski Team Faculty Advisor, Dr. Witold Kosmala, conducted a classroom session regarding proper ski technique. There was a full house including the upcoming ASU Ski Team, ASU faculty, and current ski instructors. Dr. Kosmala covered a wide variety of topics ranging from the importance of foot articulation to how to properly initiate a turn. He catered to both auditory and visual learners through lecturing, picture montages, class participations, and demonstrations.

Dr. Kosmala’s first piece of advice was to ease back into skiing. Some techniques that each skier instilled in previous seasons may not be correct. Easing back onto the slopes allows each skier to think about the proper technique and allows sufficient time to execute it. Dr. Kosmala made the point that what you want to learn is reflected in your practice.

Dr. K demonstrates ankle and knee angulation. No need for hip angulation if outside forces are not big enough. Conserve your movements. Don’t move any more than necessary. No multi-tasking while skiing. We have yet to see texting going on while navigating down the hill.
In the first drill, the class was instructed to walk around three cones in the shape of a gate. Simple enough, right? After everyone completed this seemingly easy task, the group discussed the correlation between this drill and gates. “Some people were tipped and some people leaned into the turn,” some observed. Others noticed that everyone was walking at different paces and everyone’s heads were looking in different directions. Dr. K summarized our discussion by instructing each skier to initiate turns with the inside leg. He further demonstrated how this leads one’s body to follow in the turn. To follow up, lean downhill and drive each turn with the front of the skis. “Turning with the back of the skis is like trying to drive a shopping cart backwards – one little turn will put your skis out of control,” he explained.

The next demonstration revealed how stress on the body can weaken one’s performance. To illustrate this, one participant was asked to hunch over jumping back and forth and the second participant was upright in an athletic position jumping back and forth. The participant that was hunched over, slowly began to rise proving that the more athletic of a stance, the better performance. This relates to skiing through flex and extension.

Dr. Kosmala also discussed foot articulation, the importance of pole plants, and carving. Overall, his instructions were notable and they excited the class for the upcoming season! Now all we need is suitable weather to allow us to take it to the slopes!

My name is Ashley Cutrell and I am a junior at Appalachian State University. I grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I came to Boone because I love the outdoors, hiking, football season, the leaves in the fall, and the snow. Originally, I was studying Elementary Education, but I am now focusing on Psychology and Social Work. I have been on the ASU Ski Team for three years now and I am currently the secretary. I love my teammates and racing for the USCSA conference. Skiing has taught me to take risks and to believe in myself. Skiing has become a way of life for me in the spring semester and I would have it no other way.
From Cars to Skis

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III

There is an amazing connection between driving a car and skiing. They both turn in front, they both have outside and inside wheels/edges, they both go on a surface, they both accelerate and slowdown, they make turns, they slip and slide, oversteer, understeer, and so on. And, you can race them both. But for some reason people can relate to driving a car much easier than to skiing. So, I thought that for a few issues of Peak Performance I will bring up different things about cars that can translate directly to skiing. Since it will be the optimal performance of the car in interest, we can think about car racing. In the previous issues we briefly discussed smoothness, oversteering and understeering. Here we will discuss tires. In the next issue we will go back to the tactics and technique and talk about the apex of a corner.

Tires are a vehicle’s most important safety feature, they are part of the backbone of your car. The sole contact that your car has with the road is through its tires. The engine, the brakes and every other system work directly through the tires. Even the most advanced traction and stability control systems are all limited by the tire’s ability to hold the road. Tires effect steering and load support to vehicles while also absorbing shock and creating a smooth and comfortable ride. It is imperative that the tires are properly selected, properly installed, inflated, not worn out and suited to the environment. Remember, every move a driver makes with the steering wheel or brake or gas pedal is transmitted to the road through the four notepad-sized contact patches of the tires. Your life often depends on tires’ ability to perform.

There are tons of different types of tires, all of them bringing different features to the table. There is the all-season, all-terrain, spare, run-flat, off-the-road and mud, studded, winter, road tires, specialty tires and so on. They all come in different sizes, are made of different rubber, have different tread, different features, different cost, etc.

Since your car doesn’t have the ability to change tires like you can change shoes, selecting a proper tire for your car is of outmost importance. You wouldn’t wear high heels to go hiking, and you wouldn’t wear ski boots to dance ballet. For the same reason, your car tires should be best suited for its job. Tires that are worn won't be able to displace enough water to prevent hydroplaning. Performance tires won't be able to get much grip in snow. All-season tires can’t manage the heat created in high-speed driving. Passenger-car tires might not be able to carry the heavy loads. Pickup trucks will not be able to corner like the racecars. Winter tires will be noisy, studded tires might not even be legal on the road during summer or even at all, since they damage the road’s surface.

Before you select new tires for your vehicle, determine your needs and priorities. What type of driving you will be mostly doing in this particular vehicle? Do you prefer a soft ride, a firm ride, or a mix of the two? Will you drive many highway miles at one time, will you drive in cold or warm weather, on snow or ice? Make sure you purchase a tire that is capable of supporting the load your vehicle might demand and that it is of proper size. Keep in mind that any tire selection is a compromise: a balance between ride quality, noise suppression, fuel economy, wear, load capability, and cost. Not all tires were created equal, and not one size fits all.

On the sidewall of your tire there is a code that tells the tire’s size and capabilities. For example, you may see: P195/60R16. Here is what this means:

P = type of tire
195 = width of the tire across the tread in millimeters
60 = aspect ratio of the sidewall compared to the width
R = radial construction
16 = diameter of the rim in inches
There are also codes for the type of vehicle the tire should be used for, like LT instead of P, that means the tire is a light-truck tire. A tire will also have speed rating because heat builds up on long and fast highway driving. The load capacity number on the tire-size code indicates the load-carrying capacity of that single tire. There are numbers indicating rubber thickness, and all kinds of things. A taller/softer sidewall will absorb more bumps, while a shorter/stiffer sidewall will provide better cornering ability and sharper steering response. Everything has to be taken into consideration. Winter driving is especially important when selecting a right tire for you. Depending on the rubber, some tires are slicker then others in different temperatures, just like your walking shoes.

The run-flat tire is one of the most interesting inventions in the automotive world today. The run-flat tire helps drivers avoid pulling off the roadway to change tires because the vehicle can still run on the flat tire but for a limited distance and at a limited speed.

It is important to know that tire pressure changes in your tire. Regardless of temperature, tires lose between 1-2 psi per month. In addition, for every 10 degree Fahrenheit drop in temperature, a tire will lose another pound of pressure. So a tire left unchecked from the time it was filled on an 80-degree May day to 35 psi, is down 12psi on a 30 degree day in November. That under-inflation is going to hurt fuel economy, wet traction, and increase tire wear.

As you can see, there is just so much to the tire technology and the tire usage. But now the question is: how does all this talk about tires translate to skiing and snowboarding? The answer is simple. What is under your feet? Does it touch the snow? Is it wide or narrow? Does it have sidewalls? Is it easy or hard to turn? Do you ever tune your boards, and why? Does the snow ever get stuck to the bottoms of your boards, and what is that the result of? Also, how does that feel? (I must add here that I was at this one ski area where the snowmaking guns were under the chairlift pointing up and coating everyone’s skis and boards with a nice layer of ice. Needless to say, getting off the chair was a real challenge and scraping the frozen ice was not any easier.) I think I have made my point.

Now I leave you with a few questions. Do tires wear out? Do boards lose wax? Where does all that worn off stuff go? Welcome to the world of tires. They are MADE TO LAST.

Michelin first announced the Tweel Airless Tire in 2005.
Turn to Wisdom

• If at first you don’t succeed, try reading the instructions.
• Patience is a quality you admire in the driver behind you and scorn in the one ahead.
• A person’s true character is revealed by what he does when no one is watching.
• Some people complain because God put thorns on roses, while other praise Him for putting roses among thorns.
• The humble listen to their brothers and sisters because they assume they have something to learn. They are open to correction, and they become wiser through it.

Thoughts for the Month

• If you look, do you actually see?
• What do we mean by the term: future outside ski?
• The quickest way to get from point A on the slope to point B down the slope, where B is not directly below A, is in a straight line; true or false?

Elaborations on last month’s Thoughts for the Month.

**Question:** “Z” turns. What are they, what causes them, why are they used, what should be done to make them more like “S” or “C” turns? Are “Z” turns good or bad?

**Answer:** In skiing, there is room for every activity, including “Z” turns. But, they should be used only for tactical reasons. If you find yourself using “Z” turns on regular basis, then you should try learning how to round your turns more so they look more like “S” turns. “Z”, “S” and “C” turns are named after their shape. See the illustrations on the next page. Note that “C” turns are just of larger radius then “S” turns. Sometimes skiers will turn a bit up the hill in “C” turns before starting a turn to the other side in order to manage their speed. (DO NOT do that on a very steep terrain.)

“Z” turns often result when a skier traverses a slope, realizes that they are going too fast and the trees on the side of the slope are quickly approaching. The skier erotically throws the skis sideways, rotates the entire body, trying to put all the breaks on. “Z” shaped turns are when the turn is rushed, the foot pressure is on the side of a boot, when there is very little steering, not much edge angle. When this kind of a turn starts, usually the weight quickly moves to the back of the foot, tails get over-weighted and slid out. If not controlled enough, the skier can over-turn and start skiing backwards down the hill. The skier wants to start the new turn when they are not really ready for it. They think they are. They make the “Z” turn thinking that this turn will actually slow them down, which it does, but not right away. “Z” shaped turns are common to beginning and intermediate level skiers who fear skiing in the fall line due to potential speed control issues. They don’t realize that “Z” shaped turns in fact make them go down the hill quicker then nicely rounded “S” turns, even though “S” turns involve more time spend pointing the skis straight down the hill. In “Z” turns the skier’s speed drastically varies, where as in “S” and larger “C” turns the speed remains much more constant.

What happens is that the skier needs to slow down to their liking BEFORE the new turn begins, not after thinking that they can throw the skis sideways to break. They can throw skis sideways to break before the new turn instead, if they feel they are going too fast. The speed control comes at the END of a turn, not the beginning. So, skier needs to slow down in the transition and start the next turn gently, pushing their boots only between 10 o’clock and 2 o’clock (pretending that skier stands in the center of the clock and forward is 12 o’clock.) There should be no unnecessary movements, especially at the beginning of a turn. Hip need not be moved laterally until much later in the turn, and only for resisting the pressure purposes. Shoulders should not over-rotate and head
should look to the place above the snow about 2-3 ski lengths ahead of the present position. When making a round turn, a skier can gradually change edge angles and pressures, and actually scrape snow throughout a whole turn, if that’s what they desire to do. The result is a more constant descent and more suited for a larger variety of snow conditions on various terrains. Sideways pushing involved in “Z” turn mechanics will NOT work on ice, steeps and in powder.

Lastly, skier needs to realize that whenever they start a turn they actually accelerate since the skis get pointed more down the hill. So, they need to expect acceleration. This means that their body needs to move quickly forward so skis do not run away and create even faster acceleration, called jetting. If the skier is happy with their speed before they begin a new turn, they will less-likely want to resist it and slam on their breaks by abrupt whole body rotation and excessive skidding. “Z” turns are very tiring, become a bad habit, keep a skier from progressing to the next level of abilities and should be avoided. Skiers performing “Z” turns look like forklifts trying to turn the tails of their skis instead of the tips. So, quit driving a forklift and start driving a car!

**Question:** What is frost?

**Answer:** When the temperature falls below freezing point, the moisture in the air (called water vapor) freezes into ice crystals (solid state) without first passing through its liquid state (water.) This is called frost. Certain materials like glass and car metal radiate heat quickly and therefore cool quickly and frost settles. Also, areas like rooftops, because of their exposure lose heat through re-radiation very quickly and tend to receive frost before sheltered areas. The amount of water vapor also affects the frost. For example, an exposed road may have less vapor in the air than a nearby grass because plants trap water vapor and plants transpire (emit) water vapor, and so frost forms on grass and not on the road. Besides, road might be warmer then the exposed blades of grass.
This and That

AMENDMENT

Michael Simmons wants the readers to know that his article in the September Peak Performance, on page 5, was originally written in 2001 for the PMTS newsletter. It was reprinted with permission from Harald Harb and Diana Rogers.

CLARIFICATION

In the October issue of Peak Performance I said that on Feb. 16 of this year, Inlet, NY has reclaimed its world record for the largest floating raft. (Yes, the lake is frozen in February, as some of you commented to me in your emails.) The event actually took place on Sept. 24, 2011, but it always takes several months for Guinness to make the official determination. I do not know their official posting for this record. It was sometime in January 2012. There were actually at least 1,925 boats in the raft. In 2008, Inlet had the title with 1,104 boats, which was lost to Pittsburgh who had 1,619 boats. Now the record is back in NY.

L.L. BEAN CELEBRATES 100 YEARS!

In 1911, an avid outdoorsman named Leon Leonwood (“L.L.”) Bean returned from a hunting trip with cold, damp feet and a revolutionary idea. L.L. asked a local cobbler to stitch leather uppers to workmen’s rubber boots, creating a comfortable, functional boot for exploring the Maine woods. This innovative boot – the Maine Hunting Shoe® – changed outdoor footwear forever and began one of the most successful family-run businesses in the country.

L.L. Bean has turned its attention to the water in its centenary celebration. The 100-year-old outfitter has built what it believes to be the world’s longest modular kayak. I assume they didn’t hit any rapids or try any Eskimo rolls.
Hello Skiing Friends from far and near!

Skiing is a passion in my life! I tell people that “skiing is the closest thing to flying without leaving the ground”.

The amazing terrain of the Italian Alps is calling my name and I would love you to join us on this Italy SkiSaver Offer! This is my 27th annual ski adventure and we are going to enjoy world renowned Courmayeur, Italy for 2013!

For those unfamiliar with Courmayeur, is located in the western end of the Valle D’Aosta on the border of France beside beautiful Mt. Blanc (15,780 feet), the highest mountain in Europe. The locals are friendly, the skiing and snowfall abundant, and the nightlife very lively. Skiers will enjoy supreme food, fabulous wine in many restaurants throughout the cobblestone streets of town.

Fantastic vistas totally surround wide open cruisers runs that exist they seem to never end while you chase the sun day after day! The Highest Peak is 9,039 ft with a terrific Vertical Drop of 5,023 ft. servicing 32 Lifts! The terrain has a great mix of beginner at 20%, Intermediate at 45%, and Expert of 35%. See the massive Trail Map below please.

We will enjoy a nice stay at popular Hotel Croux Courmayeur. Three-star hotel, family owned and managed, completely renovated. The Hotel is situated in a central and very panoramic location, very near to pedestrian area and only about 600 meters from cablecar. Nice restaurants, boutiques, nightlife and outdoor skating are very close to our hotel!

Space is limited to 34 people and 17 rooms! Only $250 deposit per person is required to hold your spot. Please see the attached sign-up form and send it in with your deposit.

Kindly network to all who love to share the same alpine fun we always have!

WORLD FAMOUS EXCITEMENT Courmayeur /Italy
Plus unforgettable camaraderie of our Skiing Family that is second to none!

>>>>>>
ONLY $1097.00 CDN per person dbl occupancy including taxes & fees!!

INCLUDES

March 17 -24 2013 - 7 nights hotel, 6 days skiing, Return Charter bus transfers from Geneva, Certified coaching and guiding each day, Breakfast each morning,

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Be a part of it and join us on this March SKISAVING SUPREME!

Please do contact me at rmuran@rogers.com or 416-999-1138 with questions or to book.

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WILL MAUNEY FLYING

Here is our own Will Mauney at the terrain park called “Snowflex” of Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia. Will says: “Snowflex gives you wings! I really love that place.” In my opinion, Will’s landings on skis are better than those on his mountain bike, since a few weeks ago Will had a serious crash when landing his bike. Will, get better soon!

WHERE ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE GOING?

I bet you they are all getting ready to go to Mammoth Mountain for the opening date of November 8, where else?

This is Interstate I-405 just south of Los Angeles, CA. Yes, I plan to be there again in January. I hope traffic subsides a little, so there will be room for my car on the highway as well.
Fifty years after its inception, iconic American ski company K2 is not only still going strong, but remains an industry leader in product innovation. K2 maintains its irreverent and humorous attitude – never taking the ski world too seriously, but today’s K2 engineers keep their eye on the ball, churning out progressive gear every season.

The company has come a long way. K2’s founder, Bill Kirschner, started out making veterinary splints and cages with his father and brothers, and their company became a worldwide supplier of cages. By the 1950’s Bill and his brother Don had been experimenting with making fiberglass skis. They didn’t hit up on a concept that worked, however, until the early 1960’s.

In 1964, K2, named for Bill and his brother Don (2 Kirshners) and the peak K2, delivered 250 pairs of the Holiday, the world’s first fiberglass and foam core ski. This was a complete deviation from what European ski manufacturers were doing at the time, which was to plate traditional, stiff, wooden skis with fiberglass.

K2 recruited US World Cup racer Marilyn Cochran as one of the first skiers to ski on one of their prototypes. “I really liked the ski a lot,” says Cochran-Brown. “I loved the arc – they snapped around really quick. I could hit the K2 hard, and it would just snap around for me.” In 1969, she won the World Cup overall title in GS on her K2s. By 1971, K2 was doing its own distribution. The rest, of course, is history.

By Brigid Mander
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ...

The most important thing a good ski instructor can do is staying in shape during the summer season. The reason I say this at my age over 70 years, I still play senior softball. Our team just won a bronze medal in the NC Senior Games, and our team qualified for the National Games to be held in Cleveland, Ohio in June of 2013. In these 6 games our team won 3 and lost 3, we defeated Winston-Salem for the medal. I played first base, short outfield, and catcher. I also went 8 for 10 at bat, and drove in 9 runs, in the 6 games, this is in the over 70 age group. I was a little tired after these games. I also play tennis 2 or 3 times a week. This is good for legs and lateral movement. I have a love for skiing and teaching, and I know all of our instructors at Sugar have the same attitude as I do, appearance, conduct and dedication. I know I do at my age.

By John Gaida
Former Ski School Director at
Labrador Mt., Truxton, NY

Announcements

• On October 7th, Wild Mountain in Taylor Falls, Minnesota became the FIRST and ONLY area to open in North America for the 2012-2013 season!
• Arapahoe Basin was the first to open in Colorado on October 17. The second to open was Loveland Ski Area on Oct. 23.
• DO NOT FORGET TO VOTE. Official Election Day is November 6.

Pet of the Month

Bella is a Bluetick Hound who was rescued as a pup. She is 5 yrs old and has led a life of adventure that many humans would be in awe of. In the last year she has rafted wild rivers in Alaska, explored canyons in Idaho and survived multiple rattlesnake bites when she got into a den on one of her jaunts. I have seen her hunt like a fine artist hopes to paint, with silent precision and grace in thick forests and in open plains. She can also point and flush birds with the best of them. I do not define our relationship as “owner and dog,” I view her as a teacher and friend. Bella is my favorite athlete and a top notch hound dog!

By Megan Naylor

This is Bella on the top of Jakes Peak on the West shore of Tahoe...2200 vert....she loved every second of it, just like we did. Photo by Will Mauney.