Knowledge of skiing and snowboarding is a must for a coach, teacher, instructor. It is your job to maintain a professional attitude, be a role model to everyone who interacts with you on the mountain, and help others be aware of risks and safety. You have a distinct advantage in knowing the mountain, the terrain, and the snow conditions and where to take your students. Make a point of showing this knowledge with your students.

Have you ever been somewhere unfamiliar and had your day “made” by an encounter with a really helpful and courteous person? Good weather and great snow conditions, skies tuned and your boots feel good are great. You can make somebody’s day by simply being polite, respectful and willing to take the time to listen and help others get what they need. As a coach, teacher, instructor, you are an ambassador of skiing and snowboarding for your ski area and ski school. You should always strive to be professional, responsible, accountable, ethical, risk aware, a role model, a mentor, a source of information, a source of inspiration. Enthusiasm is contagious. Remember everybody at the ski resort is a guest. Be the first one to make contact. Make a point of learning and remembering the names. Being a professional requires constantly searching for ways to grow and to help students grow. Thanks for another year. In about 8 months it will be time to slide again. Len

Len, we instructors at Sugar Mountain want to thank you for providing us with a great season at Sugar Mtn. We are the ones that guests spend the most time with. We can make their experience at the mountain good or bad. Try to imagine a ski area without a ski school, like a college without professors. We are a big piece of the puzzle, so take your hand and pat yourself on your back. You can’t always wait for someone else to do it for you.

Witold

Director’s Turn

What Makes a Successful Coach

By Len Bauer
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
AASI Snowboard, Level II

Director for 18 years
30+ years teaching
U.S. Ski Coach Assoc

Knowledge of skiing and snowboarding is a must for a coach, teacher, instructor. It is your job to maintain a professional attitude, be a role model to everyone who interacts with you on the mountain, and help others be aware of risks and safety. You have a distinct advantage in knowing the mountain, the terrain, and the snow conditions and where to take your students. Make a point of showing this knowledge with your students.

Have you ever been somewhere unfamiliar and had your day “made” by an encounter with a really helpful and courteous person? Good weather and great snow conditions, skies tuned and your boots feel good are great. You can make somebody’s day by simply being polite, respectful and willing to take the time to listen and help others get what they need. As a coach, teacher, instructor, you are an ambassador of skiing and snowboarding for your ski area and ski school. You should always strive to be professional, responsible, accountable, ethical, risk aware, a role model, a mentor, a source of information, a source of inspiration. Enthusiasm is contagious. Remember everybody at the ski resort is a guest. Be the first one to make contact. Make a point of learning and remembering the names. Being a professional requires constantly searching for ways to grow and to help students grow. Thanks for another year. In about 8 months it will be time to slide again. Len

Len, we instructors at Sugar Mountain want to thank you for providing us with a great season at your Ski/Snowboard School. You are such a hard worker. We enjoyed your looking after us and all our guests as well. We liked your understanding, your sensitivity, your smile, professionalism. Thank you, and other PSIA/ASSI certified instructors for the professional knowledge shared (often with no pay) as our ski school strives for excellence in teaching/skiing/riding.
Happy St. Patrick’s Day to Everyone!

Welcome to March! NO, the winter is not over even though some green might show in your yard. For many of us some of the best skiing and riding is still to come this season. Many will have certification exams and other clinics to go through. Some will be going out west and/or up north to make more turns. Around the Presidents’ Day, for example, Mammoth Mtn., CA received 8 feet of new snow with 4 more at the end of February. On their web site they have a photo and an advertisement that the snow is up to the 3rd floor of their main lodge with snow base depth of 12 — 18 feet on the slopes. Last year they celebrated 4th of July on the slopes. No, skiing is not over yet for many of us, and some intense training has to still take place. So, don’t let Charlotte weather spoil your mood. Come on out to the slopes of Sugar. There is plenty of snow out there and all the slopes are open. In fact, if nights are cold and days are warm, you can ski variable conditions right here at home. Nothing like soft mashed potatoes under your boards. You can read more about skiing crud in this issue of Peak Performance.

I want to congratulate everyone who went and those that are about to go to PSIA/AASI certification exams this season. Sometimes it is not easy to get ready for them and to be motivated. Many ski resorts in the nation encourage going for certification exams by providing in-house clinics, paying entrance fees if the exam is passed and giving higher pay scale. Sugar Mountain, our mountain, is a PSIA/AASI member school (see Sugar Mtn. brochure) and we use the American Teaching System. If you do not belong to this organization how in the world are you going to teach according to this method? Certification exams indicate your knowledge. How can PSIA/AASI member school exist without having PSIA/AASI members in it? Again, I applaud you all for pursuing membership in this organization and your advancement in it.

Well, how about that. In PSIA-E, Winter issue of SnowPro, Peter Howard, the Chair of Alpine Education and Certification talks about “Parallel paralysis.” I wonder if any one of us tipped him off about our discussion on that topic in questions in Thoughts for the Month in our December issue 2010 of Peak Performance, then in January 2011 issue on the Ellaborations on that topic, and in my disclaimer last month. I strongly encourage you to read Peter’s article. It’s like the goal is to reach “parallelism” and then go beyond, if need be. The key word is: reach.

Peak Performance has a very special meaning to me. It got started the season following my ski accident of March 4, 2008. When I came back to skiing in the Fall of 2008, I was just getting off the crutches, hardly able to hold my weight up, and still uncertain if I will end up keeping my lower right leg. It was hard communicating with the rest of the Ski/Snowboard School members on the slopes, and so Peak Performance was born. We have evolved and our circulation reached far ends of the snow sports world on several continents. There were simply endless numbers of e-mails as well as verbal conversations pertaining to our publication and its content. Thank you all for your support of this project. Also, my deep gratitude goes to my son, Konrad who continues to edit these newsletters. Without his help, Peak Performance would look like an ordinary newsletter instead of the way it looks now. Remember that all previous issues of Peak Performance are posted and downloadable from my web page found at

www.mathsci.appstate.edu/~wak/.

Our next issue of Peak Performance will be the April issue. Please, send all your correspondence me at

Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net.

No, the season is still on, so come on out and enjoy it. Spring will be here soon enough, so don’t rush it.
As many of you know, in late December 2010, I went skiing to Mammoth Mountain in California. Their web site indicated that Mammoth had more snow than any other ski resort in the world. My brother Andrzej, who is a ski instructor there, gave me his K2 Coomba skis to ski on. Today their name is Coomba back, have dimensions 135/102/121, have a 22-meter turn radius, have practically no side-cut, have an all-terrain rocker and belong to the K2 Backside Adventure category. What a wonderful present that was on his part, and never to be forgotten. All the work changed to play practically on all fronts: powder, crud, steeps, trees, bumps, and even the hard-packed slopes. And there was plenty of each. Let me tell you how the skis did on each of those types of slopes.

**Powder.** Yes and lots of it. Some fluffy if protected from sun, some very heavy. (The one that is wind-blown, known as sastrugi, is really considered as crud or crust, and I will get to that later.) Both skis side by side with a little space in between would create a floating platform that was wider than a snowboard. You can almost ski the same way as if on hard packed snow, if you would want to. Their soft tips just seek out the surface. These skis also have a long all-terrain rocker (that is elevated front of the ski almost all the way to the front binding.) This gives a great float in the soft stuff and easy turn initiation in especially heavy deep stuff. You can practically pivot to face down the mountain at a stand-still. The “SnoPhobic Top-Sheet” on Coombas repels snow, so skis do not build up snow in front of the boots. This feature helps in keeping the skis from diving into the deep and heavy snow.

When skiing the deep stuff off piste, always think that there could be rocks or tips of trees right under the surface. They can mass up your run, no matter how nicely your skis are floating. In fact, when I was among small trees, there was one under the surface that wanted to get my attention. My ski got hooked up on it and I took a nose-dive straight down the hill. After I tested the depth of the snow with my head, I rolled over to my feet and went on. Even if I practiced this maneuver, I could have not done it any better.

**Crud.** Since these skis provide wide base of support, especially when weighted 50/50, crud is almost nonexistent. The skis do not fall into narrow tracks. Due to their power-specific tips (the ski is widest about 7 cm further back then most shaped skis) skis are very stable and very predictable. They simply do not grab erratically just anything that comes their way. With springy tail you can come out of most unpleasant locations quickly. A firmly frozen sastrugi was not too much fun since the skis’ tips are quite soft and with a wide ski under the foot I could never brake the surface. That placed all the horrible vibration under my boots with 120 flex index. I thought I would lose my chin and all my teeth. So, with brain all shaken up I got out of that surface as fast as I could. On the other hand, soft sastrugi was dealt with as if just a thin layer of powder.

**Trees.** Since the weight of the skier is spread out over a large surface on Coombas, you can get close to the tree wells and their snowy edges do not give in so easily, even if it is only one ski that holds on. Due to a long front rocker it is easy to steer around even densely populated trees. Some trees did not have wells, which made a run a little misleading thinking you can get closer to a tree. Not true, as the soft snow will give laterally in on a turn and hooking a tree is likely. I barely missed one due to tighter turn in deep fluff being too close to the bark. It barked at me.

**Steeps.** And here I am talking about true steeps, nearly verticals. Where the wind blew the snow over the top of the mountain and created a cornice with treacherous straight down drop-ins. There were 3 of us that decided to ski down some of those steeps. When we got to the narrow opening in the piled up snow along the edge on the top of the mountain, I tried to see the slope, but could not see it. I went in a bit further into the narrow opening and saw an edge with
nothing beyond it. I knew the slope was there because I skied in that area before, but now there was a cornice. Yes, I looked around to see if there was an easier entry, and did not see one. But, I remained calm and my heartbeat fortunately did not go up much. I was the second one to drop in, and believe me, I watched the first guy go in very, very carefully. We were dropping in sideways to a slope that had barely enough pitch for the ski to grab on to. A bit steeper and it would be a free-fall down. He aimed at a little rise in the slope about 30-40 feet away with exposed rocks just a little further. If his skis slipped too much and went too low, there was really nothing else to push off to initiate a necessary turn before the rocks. The fellow in front of me did a great job, cut in the edges into the wall, got to that hardly noticeable hump in the slope, and dove vertically down with his head and chest, leaving skis on the lump until he was perpendicular to the slope. The tails of his skis flew over his head and he was cutting the slope the other way searching for another hump to push against. In one turn he dropped equivalent to a two-story house.

My turn came, and I was not going crash and fall some 1,000 feet down. This is where you really depend on your equipment. I imitated that fellow’s moves. My straight skis edged extremely nicely since they had practically no side-cut. (If there was a side-cut the tip and tail would be catching while ski under foot would be trying to reach the snow a foot or so away and heavily decambering the skis.) I got to the hump and dove down with gentle extension so the skis would not loose the contact with the snow. Rocker in the front made it quite easy to pivot, and then grabbing the side of the wall some 20 feet lower was not too bad since skis stick out on the sides of the boot. Booting out was not a problem, perhaps dragging your rear against the side of the slope would be. But, that just kept me moving my body down, and that was a good thing. When we got to a more tame pitch we stopped. Since Coombas have straight tails, I poked the outside leg’s tails into the slope at about 45 degrees and was able to relax and enjoy looking down without having to strongly counter my body like the other guys. Another great feature of the skis.

Moguls. Yes, moguls. We all know what happens to nice powder eventually. Wicked “Sierra cement” can set up pretty quickly, especially on the sunny slopes. Nice, soft tips of Coombas conformed to the surface extremely well. That was great since my boots are very stiff. And, if the troughs had very soft snow, those wide skis would not dig in, keeping me on top. I liked that. On the other hand, soft bumps were just a paradise. I am drooling, so I better write on another topic.

Hardpacked. Amazingly enough, I enjoyed those slopes on Coombas for several reasons. For one, the sensation was different than on most other thinner shaped skis. Here, when the ski was tipped on its side, feet got farther away from the slope since the ski is so much wider than the boot is. Next, the turn initiations were of no issue due to that long rocker in the front. The ski is very light. This is good not just when carrying it, but can be extremely quickly maneuvered with your feet. They are nicely cambered under foot, which provide them with power. The flat tails have a lot of life in them and can truly spring you out from one turn to the next, especially that the ski is torsionally quite stiff. I also enjoyed a new feature of progressive sidecut, which gave the skis a lot more versatility.

Yet another reason why I liked Coombas on hardpack is that “railroading” on them was just so different than on my other more conventional shaped skis. When first trying out what these Coombas are like on firm snow, I thought that I will need to make only one or two turns on the edges to get to the bottom of the hill since their turn radius is so big, 22 meters. Was I wrong. With turned up front of the ski, I could lay them hard on their edges and pick up that progressive turn radius. More. Since the tips are soft, I could pressure them more and they would beautifully tighten the track without slipping out. I truly enjoyed playing with changing the turn radius while making the railroad tracks.

One more great feature. When I wanted to rest, I could just let them run straight down without the need for turning to avoid the restlessness exhibited by skis with larger side cut. I just had to quiet them down by going more on edges when the speed got so high that they started to be nervous in the tips. You want to hear one more nice quality? Long traversing – no problem. Just put them on edge and they will go forever. None of this slipping every so often to keep the straight line as we do on skis with a large side cut.
Mountaineering. I have not done it, so I cannot comment on it from my own experience. Below I copied what K2 company says about Coomback’s mountaineering features.

“All of our Adventure skis come with flat tails because they add tremendous utility to a backcountry ski. By allowing you to easily plunge the tails into firm snow, you can build anchors, stake out your tent, or merely secure your skis while retrieving something from your pack, none of which is possible with twin tips or kick tails. Tip and Tail Holes: All Adventure skis come with holes drilled in the tip and tail that facilitate building a quick, solid rescue sled, or the construction of a ski anchor. The holes come with plugs that can be removed with a simple twist of a flat head screwdriver. These holes also function as skin attachment points for skins. Tail Strap Clip: This adjustable strap interfaces with the tail hole to secure and register the skin to the center of the ski. Unlike most clips which create friction by dragging in the snow every step, this clip sits on top of the ski, thereby improving glide and efficiency. Skin Clip Arc: The tails of our Adventure skis come with a concave notch to ensure the skin clip, regardless of size, stays securely centered on the tail.”

To summarize: I LOVED MY EXPERIENCE ON COOMBAS!!!

K2 Coomba the Backside Adventure Ski was named after Doug Coombs, who was an American alpine skier and mountaineer that helped to pioneer the sport of extreme skiing. Tim Petrick was Doug’s longtime pal who later moved on to becoming general manager and vice president at K2 Skis. Doug Coombs died on April 3, 2006 at the age of 48 when he was trying to rescue one of his friends at the Couloir de Polichinelle in La Grave, France. He is in the two photos below.

A Day In The Life of Sugar Mountain Ski Patroller

By Roger Bushnell
Sugar Mountain Ski Patroller

It’s 7:15 AM and the sun is just starting to light the morning sky. I walk into the bright lights of the patrol building and sign in and get my radio for the day. I can smell the fresh brewed coffee in the kitchen and hear the chatter of my fellow patrollers. The assignment board shows me having the top of the mountain to open. Great, I get to ski a little as I start my day.

We suit up, changing to our ski clothes, and listen to the latest jokes, jabs and rumors around the locker room. The radio blasts out a conversation between the groomers finishing up the cord roué for our first few runs. Finishing my coffee, I grab my skis and poles and head for the bottom of the lift. The lift chief gives us clearance to load and we start the 15 minute journey to the top of the mountain. The sky is Carolina blue and the sun is shining brightly on the top of the mountain. The cold quiet of the first lift ride lets you take in the songs of the birds and the babble of the creek that runs down under the lift. We share a “Good Morning” greeting with the lift ops preparing their stations as we proceed up the
The medical training is the most intensive aspect of our preparation. However, learning how to ski or snowboard while with its extensive medical training, or if you take the three-month National Ski Patrol Outdoor Emergency Care course. Becoming a patroller is a somewhat time consuming undertaking, whether you come from the paramedic community.

As we near the top, we are bathed in the warmth of the bright sunshine. We open the Summit House, turn on the heat and get out signs and drills to set up the mountain. The view from the mountain summit is spectacular today. The clear cool dry air at 5300 feet often offers a view of the Charlotte skyscrapers off to the southeast, although many a morning we are lucky to be able to see the lift building 30 feet away, due to the low cloud ceiling.

We work our way down the mountain setting up fences and slow signs, while checking that boundary ropes and signs are properly in place. A few of the regular season pass holders ski by, often calling a morning greeting. Once we get to the bottom of the mountain, everyone on the patrol reloads the chair lift in anticipation of our first top to bottom run. The whoosh and rattle of the early customers gliding down the slopes, breaks the tranquility of the lift ride up. As we ride up, we start the ritual scanning of customers, equipment and signage, ensuring everything is as it should be.

The first free run is always a thrill, as there is lots of fresh groomed snow and few customers to watch for. The expert runs are in great shape and make for fun skiing. The bright sunlight makes every terrain element clear. By mid afternoon the snow will be well scraped and cast in shadows. After the first few runs radio traffic starts to pick up and we hear, “Attention patrollers, we have a 1050, mid slope, Big Red skier’s right, tower 9”. Unfortunately, I am near the bottom below the incident so I can’t help out with this one. Another patroller radios “10,4” indicating she will investigate. A few minutes later the radio spurs out a call from the first on patroller requesting a toboggan and a quick splint be brought down from the top of the run. The familiar “10,4” comes back confirming further assistance is on the way. We are into the regular flow of calls and responding which make up much of our day.

We hope that each call will not be a critical injury that may require the activation of the Emergency Management System (EMS) to take a patient from the patrol room to a local hospital. Even worse we are sometimes faced with incidents that require us to call in Wings Air Rescue to fly the patient to a distant trauma center. In these traumatic situations many of the patrollers are needed at the scene to extract a patient from a ravine or wooded area. In these situations we often have to secure the patient to a backboard and supply supplemental oxygen. These patients, as with most others, are quickly loaded on a toboggan and skied down to the patrol room for warming and further treatment.

Skiing all day sounds great to most people, but the ten-hour days that make up a normal shift require some downtime. Breaks are taken in the Summit House to re-warm and wait for calls. It is critical that we get to incident scenes rapidly, so we keep at least two patrollers at the top of the mountain. We can get to any place on the mountain within a few minutes from the summit. We also take staggered meal breaks during the day in the patrol room kitchen, ensuring that the mountain is adequately covered at all times.

As the afternoon session comes to a close, all the patrollers gather at the Summit House in preparation for sweeping the mountain after the last chair reaches the top. Often one or two patrollers assist the mountain manager as he grooms the expert slopes. We close the slope and ensure that no customer enters the grooming area. Sweeping the mountain is undertaken as skiers complete their last run. Each slope is assigned to at least one patroller. We systematically ski down each run ensuring no one is inadvertently left on the mountain while we are closed. Our inspection includes looking over the edges of the trails and into the adjacent woods. At trail convergent points we wait to ensure no one can get behind the patrollers. We also inspect the chairs to ensure no one is stranded in a chair. On some occasions we find customers who wanted to get to the top of the mountain for their last run, and then realize they are too tired or inexperienced to make it to the bottom on their own. In these cases we provide a courtesy ride on a sled that is dispatched from the Summit House, heading into the patrol building. We are confident the mountain is clear and safe for the next session.

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Becoming a patroller is a somewhat time consuming undertaking, whether you come from the paramedic community with its extensive medical training, or if you take the three-month National Ski Patrol Outdoor Emergency Care course. The medical training is the most intensive aspect of our preparation. However, learning how to ski or snowboard while pulling an empty toboggan to an incident scene or a loaded toboggan to the patrol building with a patient onboard, takes significant training. In addition we have to become familiar with the policies and procedures of our resort. Learning the locations for sign placement, equipment storage and light switches for night skiing takes a while to remember. Daily practice is important to ensure our safety and that of our customers. The complimentary skills and interests of the patrol members, the camaraderie with fellow patrollers, the opportunity to help the skiing public and enjoying the great outdoors makes ski patrolling a rewarding undertaking.

We want to express many thanks to Roger Bushnell for his sharing what a patroller’s life style is like at Sugar Mountain. He has been a Basic level patroller for 8 years, 5 as a volunteer and 3 on the paid patrol. He is retired from the telecom industry after 33 years. His two passions are skiing and sailing.
Pareto’s Law

By Gordon Carr
PSIA-E Alpine, Level II

Now that I have your attention, what in the world does Pareto’s Law have to do with skiing and boarding? For that matter, what is Pareto’s Law and who is Pareto when he has his bibs on? Pareto’s Law is an observation, formalized by an Italian Economist, Vilfredo Pareto, stating that for many events roughly 80% of the effect comes from 20% of causes. Under a variety of different circumstances, plus or minus a bit, this observation does seem to hold for many phenomena. And in snow sports? Warren Witherell, author of “How The Racers Ski” (1972) is reported to have said that 80% of the overall positive effects of correcting boot alignment and stabilizing your foot with custom foot beds comes from the LAST 20% of adjustments and tweaking. Thus Pareto’s Law offers insight into this entire long journey of giving yourself a strong foundation in the most important piece of equipment in snow sport performance… your boots.

This won’t be an article about the technical aspects of building custom foot beds or aligning your stance within your boots. (I will provide a few references for information about those technical services at the end of this article.) The article will describe some observations, from personal experience, about going through boot fitting, stance alignment, and having custom foot beds crafted. In effect I am suggesting you will go through some time, effort, a bit of cash, frustration, and sometimes even painful discomfort before the “big breakthrough” in your skiing or riding shows up as a result of all the effort. And here is the Pareto Law: 80% of the positive effect comes from the last 20% of the fix. From my own experience, I’m not sure I was good enough to really notice all the subtle positive effects during the first few years of this process starting 12 years ago. So, for me, it is probably a good thing that the last 20% of tweaking was having the most beneficial effect.

What is this all about? In my words, you want: 1.) a neutral, but stable, stance within boots which allows a flat ski when in your normal stance, skis which are neither under- nor over-edged; 2.) foot beds which stabilize your foot so that when balancing on one foot on a hard surface when standing on just the foot beds, the “little worm” muscles in your foot don’t wiggle around constantly trying to help you balance; and, 3.) boots which instantly transmit ANY foot or lower leg movement to the snow tool, all this without causing any? pain or discomfort! A big job! And this “neutral stance” is very complex and involves canting, cuff alignment, ramp angle, delta, boot forward lean and more. It does sound like a job for a professional. The feller in the parking lot with a van, a grinder, some plastic and build-up cores who guarantees a perfect custom foot bed in 1 hour is probably not the guy to trust. Although not always possible, most boot and foot bed pedorthists and orthotists like to have multiple sessions where you can get out on the snow, test the results of the latest tweak, and report back (repeat as necessary.) You MUST have properly fitting boots no matter what your feet look like (see photo of my feet at right).

Must you have all this custom work done to enjoy snow sports? No of course not! Oodles of people use rental equipment with notoriously sloppy, oversized, soft boots and skis or boards, which rarely see the topside of a tuning bench! And yet you see an awful lot of smiles in the recreational skier crowd! In fact, when teaching higher level ski lessons over the years, I have been astonished by the skill tasks and drills we ask our guests to learn and perform (particularly any one footed skiing tasks) which they are even ABLE TO DO at all! Yet they ARE able to do many of them. Just goes to show how wonderfully adaptive this ole body of ours is… we can and do make all sorts of accommodating muscle movements to perform balancing maneuvers! BUT… when you have properly fitting boots, custom foot beds and are aligned correctly within those boots any of the high level skill tasks (like White Pass Turns) are EASIER to do and are performed more EFFICIENTLY. I have heard it said by a PSIA-E examiner of some repute that you should be able to effect any action with either leg and at any point during a turn. At any time you should be able to pick up either ski and continue on your intended path without weird body contortions to stay balanced. (For you Boarders, the overall emphasis on boot fitting and binding alignment applies, but you probably won’t be doing one-footed challenge tasks.) Don’t rush out tomorrow and start down this path without thought and consideration. However, if you know you have alignment issues (e.g. one leg shorter than the other; old sports injuries which have altered your structural bone alignment; goofy bone spurs or lumps on your feet) OR, there just are some tasks you CANNOT do on your board or skis no matter how hard you try or how much you practice, you might consider consulting a professional and start this alignment journey. It is worth the effort. You will notice a positive difference in your skiing or riding!

If you are interested in learning more about this topic, a good place to start is www.bootfitters.com, the web site of
Americas Best Bootfitters. They have explanations and a locator application to guide you to the nearest certified snow sport shop which meets their standards. What are the standards? All ABB shops must have a supervisory boot fitter with at least 10 years of experience and at least two (2) staff who have achieved top-level Masters Certification from Masterfit University. Try the locator… you’ll be surprised. The best book I’ve come across on this topic is “The All-Mountain Skier” (2003) by R. Mark Elling. The chapters are well written and cover all the bases about alignment and boot fitting. Mark is PSIA Level III certified and teaches boot fitting seminars for Masterfit University. Many PSIA publications, especially the “Alpine Technical Manual,” 2nd edition (2007) offer excellent discussion of the consequences of stance MIsalignment and poorly fitting boots. Herald Harb (former PSIA National Demo Team member) in “Anyone Can Be An Expert Skier” (2001) provides a good explanation of the basics of stance alignment and conducts alignment clinics. Mike Simmons, of our staff, has attended Harb’s clinics and could tell you more about his experience. Chris Fellows (former PSIA National Demo Team member) is another resource who discusses snow-ski consequences of alignment and foot beds in “Tactics for All-Mountain Skiing” (2006). And finally there have been several articles in “32 Degrees”, our Journal of Professional Snow Sports Instruction, during 2010, which highlight stance and alignment consequences. Recently Witold has had to go through extensive boot fitting and alignment work… I’m sure he’ll be glad to discuss this with anyone who wants more information. He has already alluded to this process in several Peak Performance articles, including the last month’s issue. So, if you aren’t where you want to be in your snow sport performance, identify a mentor (there are a bunch of really good skiers and boarders here at Sugar Mountain,) develop and write down a specific improvement plan, and consider professional consultation with an expert in fitting boots, crafting foot beds and correcting stance alignment. You’ll be surprised AND PLEASED with the results. Work with your mentor to identify specific skills which will improve your skiing or riding and remember to write down your personal improvement goals. You can’t work on GETTING BETTER; you must be very specific. You CAN focus on maintaining equal distance between your skis and legs during all parts of the turn, for example. So stance, boot alignment and custom foot beds are the foundation of personal snow sport improvement but are not enough by themselves. Don’t forget to identify a mentor, write down your personal improvement goals and have a personal “training” focus for at least some of the runs you take.

BE ALERT AND STAY SAFE

Am I a Dynamic Skier?

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III

Start by asking yourself the following questions.
1. What is dynamic skiing?
2. If I am in dynamic balance, does it mean I am skiing dynamically?
3. Is it good to ski dynamically?
4. If I ski faster, am I more dynamic?
5. Is skiing straight down the slope dynamic?
6. Is “dynamic skiing” determined by the amount of movements that body makes? For instance, do bigger flexion and extension moves create bigger dynamics? How about those of higher intensity?
7. Is it all about how high the edges are?
8. If I get on new edges early in the turn, will that make me a dynamic skier?
9. Do I have to make the ski carve in order to be dynamic?
10. Do I have to angulate to be a dynamic skier?
11. Is it loading the skis up with energy and then releasing it?
12. Does jumping make one a dynamic skier?
13. Is the skiing not dynamic if the center of mass is directly over the base of support?
14. Is it just a term that represents the way advanced skiers ski?
15. Is “park and ride” dynamic?
16. If I wave my hands to friends on the side of the slope or on a lift, does it make me a dynamic skier?
These are all good questions and I wish I could answer them all. In fact, I wish there was ONE answer to each of them. To all questions, except questions 1, 2 and 15, the answers are both: yes and no, depending on the desire, the need, the slope, snow conditions, the point of view, how it is done, what follows, and so on. Every one of these questions can be made into a full-length article, perhaps into a whole book.

In this article I will attempt to shine some light on what in my opinion dynamic skiing is in general, the big picture. Perhaps I should start with the definition of what “dynamic” means. Unfortunately, definition of this term does not truly indicate what “dynamic skiing” is all about. Usually “dynamic” means not “static.” From that it would follow that dynamic skiing means that skier and/or skis are in a constant state of change, gaining and losing energy. Something is changing all the time, and I am not talking about trees going by, or creating the “yard sale” all over the slopes. It refers to HOW the body on the skis moves down the hill. And this “how” can be determined by a personal preference most of the time.

I will try setting some guidelines for dynamic skiing, but there are exceptions practically to every rule. That means, I will wave my hands and you do what you like. Since dynamics talk about the movement, dynamic skier must have a movement, but of what? This needs to be a movement of the body (what else, ski will not move on its own!) that creates a modern skiing down the hill. This means that the movements must be efficient (so they are performed accurately and at the same time the skier does not tire out prematurely) and effective (they will do what it takes to use the skis to their full potential to get the desired job done.) Since when skiing down the hill skiers encounter irregularities in the terrain, they need to control the speed and pressure build-up, get around the obstacles, and so on, a constant change in flexing of the joints and continuous pressure adjustments by the entire body, starting with the bottoms of the feet, is necessary. If all this is done so that the ski is used to the best of its abilities, then skiing in my opinion is dynamic.

Even at the slowest speeds, dynamic skiers look different than those who are not. There is a flow in their bodies, there is a constant change in flexing of joints, progressive edge change, quality management of changing pressures. Dynamic skiers constantly adjust their moves when skiing, be it straight or in a turn. Dynamic skiers can use static moves with skill and necessity, making them a part of a dynamic run. Dynamic skiers have a much larger repertoire of quality moves ready to use at any moment then those that are not dynamic. They have much finer blend of skills than those that are more staticky. In my opinion a passenger in a car would be equivalent to a non-dynamic skier, and the driver would represent a dynamic skier. Some people enjoy being driven around and there is nothing wrong with that. But, many people enjoy driving a car and going places where and when they like.

You can think a different way. Try riding a bicycle with training wheels. This would be like skiing without dynamics. Now take the training wheels off. Isn’t there so much more that you can do now on that same bike? This would be like skiing dynamically. Of course there are different levels of dynamics. I will demonstrate this below.

Here is a typical example of a dynamic versus non-dynamic situation. On a hardpacked snow on an intermediate terrain, a dynamic skier skis a nice round tight turn decambering the skis. Looking down onto the slope this skier would see only snow, with their feet off to the side. Right before the transition he/she stops pressuring the skis by flexing their legs (not necessarily extremely abruptly.) This releases the so-called stored up energy in the skis, which project the skier to the other side of the fall line and the skier only guides them in the correct direction. The skis exhibit life and skier exhibits high edge angles, appropriate angulation, and dynamic balance over skies with varied application of pressure.

For the contrast, a less dynamic skier is able to do the same turn as described above up to the moment when the guiding of the skis takes place. But, their guiding is inaccurate resulting in a traverse during which the ski dissipates all of its energy and does nothing for the skier in starting of the next turn.

An example of an even less dynamic skier is the skier who is trying to perform the same type turn but is unable to decamber his/her skis since they cannot build up the pressure due to low edges and/or inaccurate management of pressure. Their movement of the body is going down the fall line, tails (versus the entire length of the skis) cannot hold them on track since tails are overloaded with pressure on low edges, creating a skid (or a chatter if edges are high enough and sharp.) Perhaps, this is also caused by poor steering. The skis are not used to the best of their abilities. Any wooden boards strapped to this skier’s feet would perform the same way.

Of course there are countless examples of how dynamic skiers differ from the non-dynamic ones. It does not have to deal necessarily with high edges, position of the center of mass, high speed, flexion, extension, intense movements and so on.
“Park and ride” is a description of what someone does when they tip a ski and then just ride it around an arc without any additional movements. Typical “park and ride” turns generate a great deal of energy in bending of a ski, which is released in the transition, and leave often nice tracks, but are not considered to be dynamic turns. It is like a passenger in the car holding on when the car driver turns the steering wheel and drives fast. This passenger can get tossed around from side to side by the way the driver drives, experience high pressures, but has absolutely no control as to where the car is going. Even the name “park and ride,” indicates that one does not do anything but rides on the skis along the radius of the turn that their skis wish to make. (I say “wish” because if the skier stands more on the tips, the turn will be tighter than if they stand on the tails. But, they are just standing there and not controlling as to what their body does and thus what the ski does. In fact, the ski might move the skier to another spot on the ski due to the pressures that it attains, resulting in the ski turning the way it wants to and not the way the person riding on it wants to. That person just permits the ski to do what the ski wants to do.) Since there is an undesirable lateral abrupt movement of the body in the transition, no constant refinement of the movements throughout the turn due to the build up pressures, no intention of changing of the skis’ course and the body of the skier is very static, most of the skiers would not classify those turns as dynamic. They are like linked traverses on high edges without any body movement during a turn.

And so, there you are, my opinion of a dynamic skiing in a nut-shell. Now, can you tell if you are a dynamic skier? Actually, it is more and more difficult to be a dynamic skier since the ski industry keeps making skis that can do more and more. Because of that, we, the users of this equipment need to know how to use it all and use it well. It’s like your new computer. Do you even know what all it can do? Do you know how to use it all effectively and efficiently? OK, so we talked enough, let’s go on the slopes and work on those dynamics!

### Skiing Tips

**What About Crud?**

*By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III*

Let’s talk about *crud*. Well, perhaps, but how much time do we have? Talking about crud can take years and writing about it can take pages and pages. **Crud** describes a very wide variety of snow conditions, pretty much anything other than ideally groomed snow surface or fresh powder. As you can imagine, crud can be just anything that one can ski/ride on any type of slope. It is usually a surface that many will avoid at all cost since it will very quickly humble anyone that relies on heavily skidded turns and/or keeping weight in the back seat. Crud does not come only in the springtime when snow changes to piles of heavy mashed potatoes. Think what happens after a fresh powder comes. It gets all chopped up with snowboards, one or two-tracked skis, and wells from fallen people. What about when snow melts and refreezes and creates frozen unbreakable crust which later becomes a soft, only sometimes breakable crust? How about bumps with no shape or any consistency to them?

If you talk to skiers from the west, many will say use wide skis. Some skiers will say to keep your legs bend to absorb shock. Still others will advise that you keep the same pressure on both legs. Maybe you also heard that there should be no pivot in crud. Others yet will insist that turns should be short to keep the speed down. How about the advise to keep the body facing down the hill at all times creating quite a bit of counter rotation? And I will say: go by their advise and add to that everything else that you ever learned, but ONLY at strategic places in your run down the cruddy slope. Yes, that’s right, in my opinion you will need everything you have ever learned, and then some. It all depends on what type crud you encounter at that very moment. Some techniques will not be appropriate in certain types of crud. If there was a hot day that melted the snow which froze over night you do NOT want really wide skis the next morning, or else you will loose your chin and teeth and shake your brain in the first run. If the snow is extremely heavy but soft, like it might be in the afternoon that follows, you might wish you had wider skis. But, it might be difficult to change your equipment in the middle of the day. So, try relying on your quality technique instead of your equipment.

Here are a few things that I would ask myself before going to a challenging slope that is totally cut up with very unpredictable surface and pitch.
• Can I ski groomed slopes with minimum amount of skidding?
• Can I perform dynamic short radius turns?
• Can I decamber the skis?
• Can I ski on the inside ski from one turn to the next?
• Can I make medium radius turns with long outside leg?
• Can I ski in a tall stance without my rear hanging out in the back?
• Am I afraid of having my skis point down the slope?
• Am I afraid when the speed goes up more than my comfort zone?
• Can I vary the pressure on my foot from forward to back and side to side?
• Can I ski icy slopes and powdery slopes?
• Am I strong physically and mentally?

If your answer is YES to these questions, then we have enough skills in our repertoire and we are ready to ski crud of any kind anywhere. Conditions usually vary drastically on these types of slopes. You might also be going from sunny to shady regions which will change the snow quality, from more chopped-up snow to less, from deep to icy, and you need to be ready for anything at all that comes your way.

Getting started is the hardest since you do not have momentum, which believe it or not is your friend. If you are to drop in, inspect visually the surface and perhaps others skiing/riding on it. You might be able to feel some of the surface right next to you with the tip of your pole. Remember that the first few turns are the hardest since due to lack of momentum you will not be able to adjust your balance as easily. For instance, if the surface next to you is firm, you can start skiing toward the fall line and then turn tightly into it. This is not what you would like to do if the snow is deep.

Here are a few things that you might consider doing when you are taking your first run down a cruddy slope. Once you get going you will need to feel out the surface with your skis, and then decide what all you wish to do next. The easiest and safest way to ski crud is:

• using the medium radius turns nicely rounded without too much counter rotation
• keeping 40/60, or so, weight distribution on your skis
• holding on to tall stance with long outside leg in the belly of every turn and a little past it
• maintaining contact with the tongues of your boots at all times and plant your poles
• avoiding excessive skidding at all cost
• maintaining perfect dynamic balance by using functional tension throughout your body.

This list is just the beginning, but it maybe enough for some tame crud runs. I will try to comment on each of these important points.

Medium radius turns. These are the easiest turns to make, so why not start with these if you do not know what is coming your way. Do not counter rotate your body too much as that would take away from a strong position which, believe me, you will need. Try to start your run in the fall line so you can obtain some momentum before you need to make your first turn. Try not to stop too soon so you will not have to make that first turn again. The same goes with the traverse. Try to avoid it since it will be harder to start the turn after a traverse. You don’t want any dead spots in your turning. There should be no “just standing” on the skis. No such thing as park and ride. You will definitely need to be in the driver’s seat and tell your equipment exactly what to do and when.

Keeping 40/60 weight distribution is very important. I want to say 50/50, but that is only true if the snow is deep. It is very important to have the outside leg long in the belly of the turn and a little past it, and that would not be possible with 50/50 weight on relatively firm snow. If the snow is not too deep, you do not have to worry about one ski tracking in a different surface than the other. You want plenty of pressure on the inside ski in order for it to work together with the outside to cut through all the unevenness. If there is not enough pressure on the inside ski then it will get pushed around a lot (which will mass up the outside ski and your over all performance) and might even come off.
**Long outside leg.** The reason for a long outside leg (I did not say straight) is not only so it can decamber the ski (both legs would need to decamber both skis together), but so that your hamstring muscles can be flexed together with your quads. This will give you much greater stability, support and dynamic balance. I will talk about this idea of functional tension in a moment. Remember that long leg gives you a strong position over the skis and a chance to flex if needed. If the leg is already flexed, you might “bottom out” if need for absorption comes up. Furthermore, your body will need to be automatically more forward if the outside leg is long, which will give you a better control over the tips of the skis.

**Maintaining contact with the tongues** of your boots is one of the most important things you can do when skiing crud, or anything else. Especially, on the beginning of each turn. This way you can drive your skis through whatever comes your way. First, think about getting your skis into the fall line, and then just hold on to that turn a little longer. To get a turn started you *might* need a lot of flexion and extension, or a hop, or a leaper which can be performed at some point after the apex of a turn. If you are skiing more timidly, slower, less dynamically, this move will come at the transition. However, try making a pronounced extension, not just a pretend one. It will help skis to cut trough obstacles more efficiently. When performing these moves be sure that the skis do not jet putting you in the back seat. (This often happens when you extend vertically instead of diagonally.) You might even want to actively kick both of your feet back so that shins will stay in contact with boot cuffs. But, don’t over do it. You do not want too much pressure on the tips of the skis as they can dig into cut up surface or dive into a soft snow.

Pole planting is extremely important, not just for rhythm. It will pull your body forward, keep your arms forward and in correct position, help with flexion and extension (especially if you use 2 poles at the same time.) The location of the pole in the snow will give you a “door” to go through and a third point of contact. The pole plant can be just a touch or a blocking pole plant, depending on the need.

**Avoid excessive skidding** at all cost. Try your hardest for the tails to follow the path that tips of the skis took. Since you will most-likely have some skid in each turn, make sure that the tips of the skis travel to one side just as much as the tails go to the other side of your boots. The path of the skis should stay in a very narrow corridor. Remember that if you normally ski on a perfectly groomed surface, many of your imperfections may be hidden. They will come out when skiing icy surface or deep powder, so practice skiing on those surfaces before going into crud, since their surface is more uniform.

Nice and shapely turns take patience. Do not try to rush your skis to make a turn. You need to slice the surface with the tips of your skis and not push it around with the tails. Staying in the fall line is good, maintaining movement is good, creating a solid platform is also good. Too much pivot (unless in the air) is not so good, counter-rotating also gives a weaker position (unless on very steep terrain,) and don’t over angulate. Short radius turns are susceptible to derailing more likely than medium radius turns. To control your speed remember to finish your turns, just don’t slow down too much.

**Maintaining perfect dynamic balance** by using functional tension throughout your body is one of the key elements to success in crud. Next time you are on the snow in the lift line try double shuffling your feet where both feet slide forward and then both feet slide back. Can you feel that to slide both feet forward you tighten your calf muscles, and to bring them back you tighten the shins? So, when you are in crud and you don’t want to be tossed forward or backward, you will need both of those muscles tightened, (lifting up your toes will help with that.) But, don’t tighten excessively, just enough to withstand the pressures. Too much and you will be stiff like a board and will tire out fast, neither being good. The same goes with quads and hamstrings. Since most skiers ski with weight in the back seat, they develop strong quads, but hamstrings are usually weak. To tighten them it is easier when you stand tall with hips forward. Moving up your body, to prevent being bumped around by unforgiving crud, you need to have your core and lower back tightened at the same time, but not so your movements are rigid. The trick is to tighten, but yet look totally relaxed. All this will help you stand properly over the skis and maintain dynamic balance even when going gets tough. Remember that if you have to fight with crud, you will probably loose, or at least get very tired fast. You need to work with it having proper technique, and there is no better place to start then in maintaining a good balance.
So, these are the key elements to survival in crud. Don’t dread crud, practice skiing on it whenever you can, and start on crud that is less difficult. It will test you, so you should first test yourself on groomers, ice and powder. Think carefully about your moves because your future moves will depend on them. You must make wise decisions, or else you will pay. You can also practice skiing crud without skis on. Try running on loose snow in your ski boots, running on soft dry sand with bare feet, riding your bicycle on snow or sand. That will give you some practice on controlling the lateral slipping in the lower body. Try also strengthening your shins (by running and fast walking and especially roller-skating and jumping rope,) hamstrings and core muscles. More strength you have, more accurate moves can be made. Good luck!

This and That

Carve Diem

Each time you choose a trail to ski or ride you have, in effect, chosen NOT to ski or ride thousands of other possible trails. Celebrate your choice! Be there now! CARVE DIEM.

For example, on Sunday, February 6th between 8 and 9 am, a solid blanket of fog covered Sugar Mountain and all the other mountains in the surrounding area from mid-mountain down to the base. Only the peaks of Avery and Watauga County showed through this blanket as isolated pyramids standing on a base of smooth white velvet. Standing by the entrance into Tom Terrific, Witold and I just stood and gazed at this winter wonderland. It was one of the more beautiful sights of my skiing life of 46 years, and one I had seen only 4 or 5 times before! Simply spectacular! So once in a while, pause and look at, really study and take in, the magic of our beautiful mountain in its winter finery, like the trees coated with delicate frozen rime. Point these beauties out to our guests... help them to observe and cherish our winter paradise. The “mountain life” is more than just flying down the hill on skis or boards!

By Gordon Carr

Boot Tips

Do you remember Gordon Carr’s article entitled “Saving that ACL” in March 2010 issue of Peak Performance? How about the addendum in the April 2010 issue? I encourage you to reread it. There are easy ways that ACL injury can be prevented. How about this one? If your boots are hard to put on and you need to exhibit a higher pressure when attempting to slide your foot in, it is recommended that those boots be put on when standing up. This will create less strain on your ACL and perhaps prevent an injury.

You will also obtain a more accurate buckle tension if you buckle your boots when standing up. The same is true as far as the power straps on top of the boots are concerned. Boot adjustments might need to be made as the day progresses due to outdoor temperature changes as well as the temperature inside your boot.

If you have custom boots, you should guard them with your life. Take them with you onto the plane if you fly. Don’t check them with your luggage because you might not get them back at your destination.

By Witold Kosmala

Turn to Wisdom

- If you are thinking a year ahead, sow a seed.
  If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree.
  If you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people.
- The art of being wise is knowing what to overlook.
The more a man knows, the more he forgives.

You can never achieve your peak potential if the fundamentals aren't in place.

What did the New Yorker say to the tourist that asked how to get to Carnegie Hall?........Practice, Practice, Practice. (from Justin Grimes. Can you adapt this statement to snowsports?)

**Thoughts for the Month**

- What is “chatter” and, is it good or bad if you have it? What causes it?
- Why do some skis spray the snow up in the back, where as others do not? Does it have something to do with the skier, skis, and/or the way the skier skis?

Elaborations on last month’s **Thoughts for the Month**.

- When you are tapping your foot, dorsiflexion is when you are lifting the toes and the ball of your foot off the floor. This makes the angle between the top of your foot and shin smaller. This is what you want when skiing because it will put your body more forward. Of course, you can over do it if your boots are too soft. If the dorsiflex is too big, your body will have to support itself muscularly. When it tires out, the body will rise. If the flexion is not released then you will over-pressure the tails of your skis. Not good.
- Edges before pressure. If you pressure a flat ski, it will slide off to the side from under you and you will fall inside the turn. Create the resistance first and then push against it.
- At slower and less dynamic turns, when using flexion and extension in the transition, initiate new turn with the future inside ski. Use “strong inside half” as given in February issue’s **Thoughts for the Month** elaborations. The future inside little toe is the closest to the turn, why not use it? This will encourage pressure on the future inside ski, eliminate oversteering of the old inside ski into a diverging position, it will eliminate excessive ski tip lead, it will promote proper body move across the skis eliminating excessive pressure on the tails of the old inside ski. This will also eliminate a possibility of the old inside ski tails pushing the tails of old outside ski to complete a turn by skidding it since the body will be moving forward and at a diagonal toward the new turn, instead of vertically with perhaps hip oversteering.
- Green is the color of nature, so it is used to promote “green” products. It is the most restful color for the human eye. It symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, fertility, emotional healing and protection. It is a color of peace, stability, endurance and money. Green has strong emotional correspondence with safety; it is the color of free passage in road traffic. We use green to indicate safety when advertising drugs and medical products.

Sometimes green denotes lack of experience; for example, a “greenhorn” is a novice. We also talk about green thumb, green with envy, green stuff, giving a green light, turning green and going green.

Green is the color used for night vision goggles, why is that and how do these goggles work? See: http://www.atncorp.com/hownightvisionworks.

**Announcements**

- Bill Peterson's new video of some of his Vietnam slides pertaining to his book, Missions Of Fire And Mercy may be viewed on his Facebook page for MissionsOfFireAndMercy. More to follow in the future. Or, you may go to his website: http://missionsoffireandmercy.com.
• PSIA/AASI members SAVE at Choice Hotels International®! Great Brands...Comfort Inn®, Comfort Suites®, Quality®, Sleep Inn®, Clarion®, MainStay Suites®, Suburban Extended Stay Hotel®, Econo Lodge® and Rodeway Inn® brands and Ascend Collection® properties. Go to www.psia-e.org for more information on these savings as well as many other specials offered to PSIA/AASI members.

• In last month’s issue of Peak Performance we promised you an article on Swedish Ice Castle in this issue. Unfortunately it will appear in our April issue. I hope you can wait that long to read it.

Funny Turn

YOU KNOW YOU’RE A SKI OR BOARD INSTRUCTOR WHEN...

• you know what the PSIA/AASI is
• you keep spare socks in your purse/backpack
• you are 100% comfortable walking around in public wearing your long johns/spandex
• the people you work with aren't just from your town, they're from all over the world
• you tell every parent that their kid was one of the best in the group in hopes that you'll get a bigger tip
• you keep your life in a locker in a dark basement beneath a cafeteria... or in a boot bag
• at line up, you stand in the "greeting area" in hopes that once everyone's showed up, there's no group for you to work with

Mike Hicks, thank you for amusing us with these statements. We can all relate to them. I skied with Mike on a PSIA event at Whitetail Resort, PA a month before my accident. Mike was a ski instructor there now for 19 years and going strong. He is an awesome skier and a wonderful person. Mike is PSIA Alpine, Level III certified trainer for his ski school at Whitetail.

The story below is not funny until the very end.

A number of years ago when skiing in Winter Park, CO with my brother Andrzej, we tagged up with a little older skier named Roy. He was just so smooth, while my brother and I believed that faster the better, and the higher and longer jump the better as well. We seemed to come from two different worlds.

Roy, Andrzej and myself went to a supper where Roy told us his life’s story. You see, Roy had an artificial leg. He said that when he was young he was a very flamboyant skier, and then he crashed, broke his leg, which never healed. Doctors had to amputate it. Later he had a prosthetic put on and started to ski again. It was a long road for him to “recovery.” He found skiing on the artificial limb very difficult and had to become a very graceful skier. And here is one story that he told us.

One day, after a long time of learning how to ski with his prosthetic, Roy decided to check himself out on a bump run under a chairlift. Roy said that he picked up some good speed and was doing remarkably well for his condition when all of the sudden he fell. It was one of those “yard sale” falls. He lost his hat (this is before helmet era), goggles, poles, skis, and … his prosthetic broke off as well. His whole ski boot with the artificial limb in it was tumbling down the hill. To Roy there was no pain, but to the people on the chairlift it was a different story. (I thought of Roy many times during my recovery from my ski accident in 2008. I am sure glad I waited with my crash, or else I would have also lost my limb like Roy did his.)

By Witold Kosmala
Can you possibly imagine what Oscar’s life is like? Did you count your blessings yet? Oscar explains how difficult it is to keep balance on the curves around the track going as fast as he is going, especially when it is slick.

Oscar Pistorius of South Africa is the fastest man on no legs. With aid of high-tech carbon-fiber legs, he is almost as fast as the best able-bodied runners in the world.

From Gordon. He must have been thinking about me.