Happy Easter Everyone!!!

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Zack Dease, where did you hide your new silver pin? Photo by Doug Washer

Is there anything else one could possibly say?
So, our ski/snowboard season is at an end. It is time for reflections and planning. It is time to learn from past experiences and time to implement some changes. We ask ourselves some important questions. Was the season like you hoped it would be? Was our Ski/Snowboard School operating to your liking? Was there anything that you could have done more of for the betterment of the operation? Was the public happy with their experience at Sugar? Did

From the Top

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
kosmalaw@bellsouth.net

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members of our School help them, got them hooked, and expect to see them again next season? We have to remember that it is us, the little people, that have the closest contact, (perhaps hours at a time), with our visitors, and we are the ones that have a lot of power to either effect them positively, or to turn them away.

Now, look at your own skiing/snowboarding. Did it improve over the length of the season? Why or why not? It is like in any discipline, we must stay “current” and the best we can be at what it is that we need to do at the mountain. Do you feel like you came prepared for the season? If you are an instructor, did you come physically and mentally ready? Did you use the off-season constructively in order to be an effective ski/snowboard instructor? Did you go this winter for PSIA clinics and exams well prepared? If you so desire, talk to Len Bauer about Ski/Snowboard School issues. If it is a PSIA issue that you would like to be known, then contact Mike Simmons at: “Mike Simmons” <mds@i-americain.net>. He is our PSIA-E Area Rep.

I feel great about my personal achievements this season. Swelling in my foot went down during the course of the winter from barely fitting rear-entry boot size 12 to a size 10. In early December, I had a very difficult time skiing down Easy Street. In February, I was able to navigate down Whoopededoo, with unbuckled rear-entry boot on one leg. I am trying to focus on positives. The negatives are so easy to see, and they block the view of positives. I am not saying that we should not see the negatives. We should, and we should act on them. But, they should not mud our lives, as to not seeing life in a positive light, and counting our blessings that we all have. But yes, there is a room for improvement, and we all should search our souls and do what is in our power to make some improvements.

By the way, our next Newsletter will be in July. I truly hope you all will have a wonderful and prosperous off-season. Send all articles, announcements, and any comments to me at Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net.

Education

By Gordon Carr
PSIA-E Alpine, Level II

As we approach the end of the season, I thought it might be appropriate to remind us of ways to become sensitive to what it feels like to “learn something new”. I adapted the following article I wrote and which was published in the PSIA-E’s SNOW PRO several issues ago to call attention to an important dimension about learning new motor skills. Hope it is helpful.
Learn to Chi

Last year, I totally missed the ski season for medical reasons. “So,” I said to myself, “why don’t you follow the frequently offered advice in SnowPro and learn a new activity/sport so you can re-experience what it is like to be a beginner again. Get back in touch with the fears and trepidations, the uncertainties, timidity and anxiety which many of your Learn to Ski students have. Experience what it is like to ‘start over’”. So, I signed up for Tai Chi classes.

Tai Chi, the exaggeratedly slow movements of choreographed forms, embraces balance and movement coordination, demands exquisite muscle control, and effects a paradoxical, almost contradictory, relaxed, yet focused mental concentration. All of these skills, in my mind, would relate to improved skiing for me as an added bonus in addition to getting in touch with the “new student” learning experience again. Little did I know…!

After being in class several months, with almost daily personal practice and weekly sessions with the Tai Chi Master, it became obvious that the beautiful, ballet-like flow of movement, the exquisite coordination of the, e.g. right hand little finger with the opposite ankle movements, by the Master was something I likely could never achieve…there just weren’t enough years left in me for practice! And yet I also realized how similar this must be for most of our ski or snowboard students who maybe hit the trails one or two weeks a year at max and who are observing the seemingly effortless flow and coordination of e.g. edge release and engagement during turns by their instructor (who has skied probably 80+ days each year!). Just as for me in Tai Chi, it is equally unlikely that the occasional recreational skier will EVER achieve the skills and movement mastery equal to their snow sports instructors.

After several months, one of my Learn to Chi (pun intended) classmates verbalized this to our Master, “How can we ever master the coordination of fingers and wrist, of arms and legs to produce the ballet-like flow of your movements?” The Master’s answer…? “YOU CAN’T!, not unless you devote 10 or 15 years of daily study!” “But,” he continued, “The benefits of Tai Chi are not achieved just by the mastery of choreographed movements. Much, much more important are the sincerity of your focus and your mental INTENTION while doing the Tai Chi forms, at your own level of accomplishment. This is the essence of Tai Chi!”

To me this was a revelation. I have always known that helping my ski students polish current skills and practice new movement patterns and tactics on their ski journey were the fun-
damentals of their lessons. But I have also known that, older students taking lessons as part of their once yearly, weekly ski trip (and usually in sloppy fitting rental boots and on skis whose edges last saw a file for sharpening when Methusala was a pup), will likely never become expert, all mountain skiers! But, perhaps, too, like Tai Chi, we must learn as instructors to help them celebrate the sincerity of their INTENTION! Sure, accurate movement analysis and instruction helping them to become better skiers is very important—but so too is the glorious, intense sense of accomplishment experienced by the beginning skier or snowboarder successfully making her first Blue trail run! I sometimes think we instructors are so quick to look towards the NEXT skill level for our students that we fail to take enough time to celebrate the sincerity their INTENTION now, which has lead to their current level of accomplishment.

“Learn to Ski, yes, but maybe also Learn to Chi!”

So, as we approach the end of season here at Sugar Mountain, it is time for all of us to consider learning a new sport over the summer. Here is a “thought experiment”. For those of you who ride bicycles, try to deliberately fall. It is very, very hard to do. Your body automatically adjusts and recovers balance. As an experienced biker, you almost can’t fall! The same thing happens in skiing and snowboarding; you maintain and recover balance automatically and unthinkingly. How can you, as an accomplished skier or boarder, get “inside the head and truly feel” what your new student is feeling in our slick, cold snow sports world as they try to learn? By learning a new sport, roller blades, for instance, you will get a rude awakening as to how it feels to be a “Newbie”! And if you do this you WILL be a better instructor next season! Summer will be great, but think COLD and SNOW anyway!!

Health Course

To Smoke or Not to Smoke; That is a Question

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III

This article is to raise awareness about different issues pertaining to smoking cigarettes. It is not to condemn those that do smoke. In an outline form, to save space, some information is given.
Cigarettes and their contents

Tobacco in the US is unregulated, and so, companies are allowed to put whatever they like into cigarettes.

On the average, one cigarette contains over 4,000 chemicals with over 40 of them being cancerous. Some of the cancer-causing agents are: nitrosamines, benzopyrene, urethane, and toluidine. Cigarette also contains metals, like: lead, copper, mercury, aluminum. Other chemicals with strong effects on health are: acetone (nail polish remover), ammonia (toilet cleaner), arsenic (rat poison), butane, carbon monoxide (car exhaust fumes), formaldehyde (embalming fluid), hydrogen cyanide (gas chamber poison), toluene, and naphthalene (known as mothballs.) Nicotine in cigarettes is an addictive poisonous compound. Tobacco plants contain nicotine, so that bugs don’t eat their leaves.

What happens when one smokes?

- Smokers cough more because lungs are struggling to clear out dirt and deposits.
- The heart speeds up 10 – 20 beats per minute.
- The blood vessels tighten (get narrower), so that blood pressure goes up 5 – 10 points.
- Carbon monoxide reduces the oxygen in the blood. Together with restricted blood flow, less oxygen gets to feet and hands, sometimes resulting in amputation.
- The temperature of the skin drops 6 degrees F.
- The level of blood sugar falls.
- Nicotine reaches the brain in 8 seconds, (note that it takes 12 seconds for injected heroin or cocaine to reach the brain.)
- Smoke odors are trapped in clothing, hair, and other surfaces. Even if one smokes outside, they bring contaminants inside on their clothing and hair, which is re-vaporized into the air and deposits on furniture and carpets. Smoking also gives a breath which no mint in the world will cure.
- Cigarettes cause wrinkles.
- Smoking causes depression.
- Once inhaled, about 70% of the tar in the smoke is deposited in the lungs. Look at the bottom of the link
Since smoking damages vocal cords, smoker’s voice will become raspy.

Male and female smokers become infertile.

Facts about smoking

- It is expensive, and kids imitate adults.
- Smoking causes more than 15 types of cancers, which include cancer of the lungs, mouth, voice box, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, stomach.
- Smoking increases risk of getting lung diseases like pneumonia, bronchitis, and emphysema.
- Smokers are twice as likely to die from heart attacks as are non-smokers.
- Tobacco and nicotine related diseases kill more than 440,000 people every year. That’s like two jumbo jets crashing and everybody dying, every day.
- Smoking takes an average of at least seven years off every smoker’s life, this means five and a half minutes per cigarette.
- 3,000 non-smokers die of diseases caused by exposure to second hand smoke every year.
- Children are especially sensitive to second-hand smoke, developing asthma, lung and ear infections.
- Smoking right before and during pregnancy causes birth defects.

Why people smoke

- Cigarette smoking is a personal choice. The act of smoking is personally meaningful. Often smokers regulate how they puff and inhale in order to attain their desired dose of nicotine.
- Smoking is a lifestyle.
- Smoking helps to cope with anger, stress, anxiety, tiredness, or sadness
- Smoking is pleasant and relaxing
- Smoking is stimulating, (so how can it also be relaxing?)
- Smoking makes one a part of a group
• Smoking defines self as different or unique from a group
• Smoking is a way to socialize
• Smoking provides support when things go wrong
• It is a way to look confident and in control
• Smoking keeps weight down
• It gives something to do with your mouth and hands
• Smoking shuts out stimuli from the outside world
• Smoking shuts out emotions from the inside world, such as sadness, grief, and anxiety
• It is something to do just for you and nobody else
• It is a way to feel confident
• Smoking shuts off distressing feelings
• It is a way to deal with stress or anxiety
• It is a way to get attention
• Smoking marks the beginning or the end of something
• Smoking tranquilizes
• Smoking gives a phony sense of well-being that never produces a permanent satisfying or fulfilling result

**Benefits From Quitting Smoking**

• After 20 minutes, blood pressure drops to normal.
• After 10 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal.
• After 48 hours, nerve endings start regrowing and the senses of smell and taste are improved.
• 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting circulation improves and lung function increases.
• In 1 to 9 months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease, cilia (tiny hair-like cells that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.
• After 5 years, the chance of dying from lung cancer decreases by almost a half.
• After 15 years, the risk of heart disease is equal to that of a nonsmoker.
How to quit?

Breaking any type of addiction and habit can be very difficult, especially since nicotine causes many changes in the brain. Addictive drugs can cause unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal when trying to quit. When nicotine is present in the system a smoker may feel good, and when it's not present a smoker may experience all types of bad feelings.

One needs to realize that after quitting smoking and overcoming the withdrawal symptoms, one is still faced with many of the same pressures that made them start smoking in the first place. Additionally, the psychological dependence can linger for years, making it difficult to avoid using cigarettes again.

The most important factor in stopping smoking is a genuine desire to stop smoking. No one was a born smoker; it’s something that was learned to do. But, unlearning is not easy. It is not only kicking the habit, but also creating a new balance with the body, mind, and self!

So, do you want to quit? Why or why not? Before lighting up your next cigarette, ask yourself:

- Why do I smoke in the first place?
- What positive functions do I believe smoking provides me?
- How will smoking help or change my life style?
- What situations make me smoke the most?
- Are there emotions or feelings that I am trying to avoid or deny?
- If I didn’t smoke right now, what would I feel? How would I handle that feeling?

So, the bottom line is, how badly do you want to quit?

A Funny Turn

At the ski and snowboard school where I previously worked, there was a ski instructor, who since her beginning years in the 1950s had build up quite an extensive clientele for private lessons. Many of the people had been skiing with Ethel the same hours of the same day of the same week of every season for years! Needless to say, Ethel was very possessive of her clients and vigilantly kept her eye on the private lesson assignment book. At every spare
moment when she wasn’t teaching, she would haunt the front desk looming over the assignment book inquiring about any call-ins for her or lessons assigned for the next day. However, the rule was that if an instructor was totally booked for the day and someone additionally requested them, by name, that same day, the lesson, never-the-less, was assigned to the next instructor on the rotation list. This scenario occurred to Ethel one day of a very busy February vacation week, when she was totally booked. One of her long time private clients arrived and wanted a lesson that day, at that moment, and as I was the next instructor available, the lesson was assigned to me.

The next day, at the conclusion of our weekly staff safety meeting, with about 100 instructors present, Ethel piped up and said, “And by the way Gordon, I don’t appreciate you messing with my Privates!” Needless to say the room erupted in uproarious laughter and hooting. Before I could even respond, Ethel inserted her foot even further by exclaiming, “I don’t see what’s so funny about Gordon interfering with my Privates?! I don’t mess around with his!!” And now people were on the floor and I suspect some had wet their ski bibs laughing so hard. At this, Ethel was so incensed she stormed out of the locker room! She never did get the double entendre!! To this day, instructors at Sugarloaf still ask each other if they have been “messing with anybodies privates!”

By Gordon Carr

Announcements

• April is a Mathematics Education Month. Let me tell you a short story of Marie-Sophie Germain, who was born in Paris on April 1st, 1776. When she was a little girl, her father turned off the heat and light to her room when he found out she was studying geometry. Later, she took correspondence courses from the Ecole Polytechnique because they did not allow women in the school itself. In order for great mathematicians of her time, Lagrange and Gauss to look at her results, she had to use the pseudonym M. Leblanc in her correspondence. Ultimately, she made significant contributions to acoustics, elasticity, theory of numbers, and to the proof of Fermat's last theorem. After she had established her reputation in mathematics, Gauss recommended her for an honorary doctorate from the University of Goettingen, but she died of breast cancer before it could be awarded. Don’t you feel lucky you can study mathematics without hiding?

• April 22 is an Earth Day. So, what does it mean to you?

• April 24 is a nationally recognized Arbor Day, encouraging tree planting and three care.

• April 30 is a National Honesty Day. Honesty is a great virtue. If we want people to believe us, then we need to be honest all of the time. We all know about the boy who cried wolf. When a wolf actually appeared, no one believed him.
• 32 Degrees, a PSIA publication, Spring 2009 issue, has a very good article pertaining to stretching. I strongly recommend reading and learning from it.

Newsmakers

• Witold Kosmala became a member of the International Ski Instructor Association.

Thoughts for the Month

• What does “professional skier/snowboarder” mean to you?
• What is a “skki?”

Write a Caption for this Photo...

Photo by Michelle Bauer

Send your turns to kosmalaw@bellsouth.net