

PSIA



AASI

Winter 2017 News | Volume 35 Number 1

Northern Rocky Mountain Division

Letter from the Interim President

Hello All,

As I write this, Red Lodge is getting dumped on! I hope all of you are enjoying some freshies at your local ski areas!

Most of you have heard that President Mike Ewing and Treasurer Tony Brown have resigned their positions with NRM. I wish to thank them for their contribution to our division. During their tenure, NRM has shown amazing growth. Membership numbers have shown remarkable increases at a time when other divisions have not. Our financial strength has grown along with the membership. Under Mike and Tony's leadership, we have seen the creation of a fund which ensures financial security well into the future. We have also seen dramatic growth in the Education Foundation due in no small part to their stewardship. The remaining Board members and I are committed to continuing these progressive programs. In the short time I have been interim President, it has become apparent that I will be hard pressed to match the strong leadership exhibited by Mike and Tony.

I also wish to thank Matt Ruuhela for stepping up to replace Tony Brown as Treasurer. I know Matt will work hard to safeguard the financial stability of NRM.

With the resignation of Mike Ewing I will be fulfilling the obligations of President of NRM until a new president can be elected at the spring Board of Directors meeting.

Through this transition period, your Board of Directors is committed to providing you all with the same high level of service to which you have become accustomed.

Our Executive Director, Meghan Larson, has accepted a position with another organization. Meghan is assisting us with certain day to day operations through February. She will be helping to train the new Executive Director when the position is filled. Our professional development coordinator, Jill Chumbley is taking on additional duties

as well. The Board recognizes Meghan and Jill for their dedication and hard work during this difficult time.

A committee was created to explore various management models and rewrite job descriptions to fill the ED vacancy. This committee is comprised of Board members, standing committee members and general membership, along with input from a national level. It was thought necessary to have more than one individual qualified to handle the operations of the division. Splitting the overall responsibilities of the current ED position between an ED and a business manager was deemed to be the best structure. This split would allow the managers to concentrate on specific duties per the respective job descriptions. Efficiencies would be maximized and member services would be improved. The Board of Directors was presented with these recommendations and adopted the new structure by unanimous vote.

The Executive Director/Business Manager model has been used successfully by many, many businesses and organizations. PSIA/NRM has outgrown the current single manager model. No one individual can be expected to efficiently and effectively carry out all the job requirements identified during the committee's deliberations. The new system has the potential to take NRM to the next level of service to our membership.

Only one thing in this world is predictable: change. Successful businesses recognize that fact and use it as an opportunity to improve their operations. The Board of Directors of PSIA/AASI-NRM is dedicated to seizing this opportunity to improve our organization. Our goal is to provide the membership with services that are unmatched by any other division.

If you have questions or concerns, please refer to the NRM website. You will find contact information for every officer and Board member listed under "Leadership".

See you on the slopes!

Sincerely,
Craig Beam, NRM Vice President

Officers, Directors & Chair Contact Info

President
Craig Beam

Secretary
Dick Fast

Treasurer
Matt Ruuhela

National Board Representative
Eliza Kuntz

Professional Dev. Coordinator
Jill Chumbley

Adaptive Chair
Rebecca Starr

Alpine Chair
Tom Marshall

Children's Chair
Zoe Mavis

Freestyle Chair
Matt Larson

Nordic Chair
Mary Marshall

Snowboard Chair
Bridger Biggins

Snowsports School Mgmt. Chair
Beaner Thacker

Board of Directors
Dick Fast
Stu Hoyt
Chris Kronebusch
Jim Mikulich
Matt Ruuhela
Karl Svensson

Craig Beam
Red Lodge Mountain
406.855.3058
mtroutscout@hotmail.com

Bridger Biggins
Big Sky Resort
406.861.3630
nrm.snowboard@gmail.com

Jill Chumbley
Big Sky Resort
406.539.3222
education@psia-nrm.org

Dick Fast
Big Sky Resort
406.581.7442
fastski@3rivers.net

Stu Hoyt
Lost Trail
406.370.5757
stuhoyt@yahoo.com

Chris Kronebusch
Big Sky Resort
406.579.8445
clkrex@yahoo.com

Eliza Kuntz
Red Lodge Mountain
406.446.2610
snowsports@redlodgemountain.com

Matt Larson
Big Sky Resort
406.570.7930
nrm.freestyle@gmail.com

Karl Svensson
Terry Peak
605.517.0737
lapstrake13@hotmail.com

Mary Marshall
Big Sky Resort
406.241.7484
nrm.nordic@gmail.com

Tom Marshall
Big Sky Resort
406.539.4216
nrm.alpine@gmail.com

Zoe Mavis
Big Sky Resort
303.667.0421
nrm.children@gmail.com

Jim Mikulich
Big Sky Resort
815.871.8531
jimmikulich@yahoo.com

Matt Ruuhela
Big Sky Resort
406.600.7980
mruuhela@gmail.com

Rebecca Starr
Eagle Mount - Billings
802.522.9594
nrm.adaptive@gmail.com

Beaner Thacker
Terry Peak
605.645.2868
beaner@terrypeak.com

The Northern Rocky News is published twice a year by PSIA-AASI NRM and the PSIA-AASI NRM Educational Foundation. Members are encouraged to submit articles and photos. Educational articles earn six credits. Letters to the editor and response to articles are also encouraged. Content can be sent to info@psia-nrm.org EDITORIAL POLICY: All submissions will be edited for content, clarity, accuracy and to fit available spaces. Not all submissions are guaranteed inclusion. Ad rates are based on \$200/page.

2017 EVENTS CALENDAR

Dates and locations are subject to change. View NRM website www.psia-nrm.org for event details, prices and online registration. Please direct any questions or requests for clinic topics and/or locations to the NRM office at info@psia-nrm.org. We look forward to skiing and riding with you!

ALPINE

Feb 11-12	Level 1 Exam	Showdown
Feb 11-13	Level 2 Prep Clinic	Terry Peak
Feb 19	MSSA Training Series 4	Blacktail
Feb 23-24	Hiking & Skiing Lone Peak	Big Sky
Feb 26	MSSA Training Series 5	Lost Trail
Feb 27-28	Level 2 Exam	Jackson Hole
Feb/Mar	TBD 1 Day Fun Clinic	Bridger Bowl
Mar 1-3	Level 2/3 Prep Clinics	Bridger Bowl
Mar 3-4	Level 1 Exam	Maverick
Mar 5	MSSA Training Series 6	Lost Trail
Mar 9	Ski Like a Girl	Lost Trail
Mar 9-10	Level 2 Exam	Garmisch
Mar 11-12	Level 2/3 Exams	Discovery
Mar 13-14	Level 3 Exam	Garmisch
Apr 4-5	Level 2/3 Exams	Big Sky
Apr 6-7	PSIA Hiring Event	Big Sky
Jun TBD	Camping & Skiing Clinic	Beartooth Pass

SNOWBOARD

Mar 2-3	Level 2/3 Exams	Big Sky
Apr 9-10	NRM AASI Staff Selections	Big Sky
Apr 13-14	NRM Rider Rally	Big Sky

SENIOR SPECIALIST

Feb 16-17	Senior Specialist 2	Bridger Bowl
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NORDIC

Feb 17	Children's XC Ed Clinic	Bohart
Mar 4-5	Telemark Level 1 Exam	Lost Trail
Mar 5-6	Telemark Level 2/3 Exam	Grand Targhee

CHILDREN'S

Feb 25-26	Children's Specialist 1	Lost Trail
Mar 11-12	Children's Specialist 1	Great Divide
Mar 16-17	Children's Specialist 2	Big Sky-Madison
Apr 1	April Fools Fun Clinic	Big Sky

FREESTYLE

Feb 14	MSAA's Annual Pro Park	Great Divide
Feb 16	Freestyle Training w/ Ryan Christofferson	Big Sky
Feb 23-24	Freestyle Specialist 1	Great Divide
Feb 27-28	Freestyle Specialist 2	Jackson Hole
Feb 27-28	Freestyle Specialist 3	Jackson Hole
Apr 6-7	Iron Team Hiring Event	Big Sky

Additional clinics may be held "in-house" at area snowsport schools. These clinics are held at member schools specifically for that school's staff. Check with your school's director for schedule and availability. Additional exams and clinics will be considered upon request.

Event Registration Policy

Minimum and Maximum Participant Numbers and Policy: The minimum number of participants for an event is six.

The maximum number of participants is ten for educational clinics and eight for credentialing events. If registration numbers exceed these maximum numbers an additional clinic/exam groups may be created provided the new group numbers meet minimum number requirements.

****The annual ProPark at Great Divide:** This winter PSIA-AASI NRM's freestyle coaches - the Iron Team - will be teaming up with Great Divide Ski Area to put on the annual ProPark event. This one-day event is offered to ski area employees and/or snowsports shop employees in the state of Montana. The event combines NRM's professionally trained coaches and the Smart Style-Park Smart education program to promote freestyle/ terrain park safety and personal rider improvement. The Smart Style-Park Smart www.terrainparksafety.org is a national freestyle safety program developed by Burton Snowboard and the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) to foster safe use of freestyle terrain by staff and the public alike.

NOTE: This event is by invite only. Advanced registration is required. If you are a PSIA-AASI member and would like to receive 6 ed credits for attending the Freestyle Jam, choose the \$30 registration.

Cancellation & Refund Policy

Should cancellation become necessary seven days or more before the event, your registration fees will be refunded less a \$10 cancellation fee. Within seven days of the event half of the registration fee will be refunded. No refunds will be given if requested on the day of the event or later. All requests must be made directly to the NRM office.



ALL THE KNOWLEDGE YOU NEED, ALL IN ONE PLACE.

Download the Snow Pro Library app for everything you need to know, on-mountain and off, with or without a wireless connection. Get quick access to PSIA-AASI's instructional videos, *32 Degrees* magazines, *Accessories Catalog*, manuals, and a whole lot more. It's bottomless, on-the-go knowledge.



TheSnowPros.org

#snowpros



2017 PSIA-AASI NRM BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

The following 5 members are in the running for 2 open seats on the NRM Board of Directors. Please review their statements and cast your electronic vote by March 31, 2017.

Dear all PSIA-NRM members,

Following this message are the bio's and photo's of five of your fellow members who have volunteered to run for two open positions on your PSIA-NRM board. Please give them a close look and, when you get your ballots via email later this month, take a few minutes to vote for the two you would like to have represent you on the board for the next three years. Our organization is growing and going through a lot of changes these days and the people representing you will have a big influence on the future successes of this organization. Please take the time to register your vote. The email you receive will have directions on how to do so. Thanks for your time.

Dick Fast
Board Secretary
PSIA-NRM

Once elected, the new board members will take office at the spring 2017 board meeting and serve a three-year term.

Electronic ballots will be emailed to all eligible voters before the end of February. Ballots must be submitted by March 31st. Results will be announced mid April.

Current Board & Term:

Dick Fast: 6/19
Stu Hoyt: 6/18
Chris Kronebusch: 6/19
Jim Mikulich: 6/17
Matt Ruuhela: 6/18
Karl Svensson: 6/19

In addition to selecting two board members, the following officer & chair appointments will take place at the spring board meeting:

President
Secretary



CRAIG BEAM

Fellow Snowsports
Professionals,

My name is Craig Beam. I am the Snowsports Manager at Red Lodge Mountain Resort. This is my 14th consecutive season at RLM. Many of you know me, as I have attended Fall Fest for the last ten years and served on the Board of Directors for PSIA-AASI NRM from 2011 through 2014. During that time, I acted as Secretary for the organization. Last spring, the

Board appointed me to the position of Vice President. I am a non-voting officer because I was appointed by the Board, not elected by the membership.

Some of my other qualifications for this position include:
Current owner of two successful businesses.
Served on the Red Lodge City Council (Public Works Chair)
Served on the BOD of the Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce (Marketing Chair)
Beartooth Front Community Forum Steering Committee
34 years of business management experience

The bulk of my current job is spent teaching all levels of students, including first time 3 year olds. When I'm not teaching, I'm in the Learning Area supporting our instructors of all disciplines. I truly understand the needs of the whole membership of NRM. I am asking for your vote because I believe I can be more valuable to our membership as a voting board member. If I am elected, my promise to you all is to always put the interests of the membership first. PSIA-AASI NRM exists for the benefit of the membership, not the discipline committees or resort interests. There should be no other agenda.



JIM GOLD

I'm Jim Gold, I live in Great Falls and I am running for a spot on the NRM Board of Directors. I've been fortunate to be a part of the

remarkable skiing community at Showdown Ski Area for over 30 years and have been a NRM member for nearly all of that time. As a young ski instructor, I had a great deal of assistance and encouragement from both the Showdown staff and the Division as I was going through the Level 2 and 3 certification tests. As my wife and I were raising our two sons, I continued to teach skiing and to be supported and inspired by going to Fall Fest and other clinic events that were offered. Recently, as the boys have moved on to college, I've found a new passion in telemark skiing and earned my Level 1 certification in 2014.

In running for your Board of Directors, I want to bring that similar enthusiasm to the Division. I have 3 decades of small ski area experience to draw on, but I've also been motivated to look forward and find new challenges. Just as solving problems and meeting the future needs of the Division needs a historical perspective, we also want the spirit to innovate and find solutions that keep our Division moving ahead.

Thank you for your consideration.

JIM MIKULICH

Hello NRM members, my name is Jim Mikulich and I would appreciate your consideration to serve a 2nd term on the board of directors. I have been a member of PSIA for over 30 years, and have a background of working as a full time, and part time ski instructor. I have worked at both small and large resorts during my career in snow sports. Currently I work at Big Sky Resort as a full-time instructor. I have served as Clinician for two divisions, and I am currently a member of the NRM education staff. Serving our membership as a clinician has allowed me the opportunity to get know and better understand the needs of our membership. I feel that this background gives me the understanding of the wide scope of our memberships needs.



I would like to continue to serve on this board because I am very familiar with the challenges and vision for the future success of our division. I feel a big part of a successful board is that you must be able to work together as a team. When voting on issues, I have always listened to all sides and voted for what would be best for the members and the sustainability of the division into the future. I would like your vote so I can continue to represent the membership.

DAVE CASTO

My name is Dave Casto and I would like to serve on the PSIA-NRM Board of Directors. I have been a member of NRM for about 25 years. I have volunteered in the past as a member of the Alpine Committee and as the Committee chairperson. I have worked as a member of the education team for 19 years.

Having worked for three different snow sports schools and a ski education foundation in NRM has provided me with a variety of experiences to help understand the perspective of members from across the division.



Outside of the ski business I have owned and operated 3 businesses. I have also served on the BOD of a nonprofit school I helped start for the past 5 years. I hope to bring the experiences gained from these experiences to the table to benefit the membership of NRM.

During my tenure with NRM, the development of disciplines and specialist programs has increased the quality and diversity of the experience to our members. This has happened due to the passion and hard work of many people and committees. The more involvement we can generate participating at the committee level building the educational foundation of NRM the greater potential we have to impact the members of NRM. The outreach created when committees are empowered to build and create is awesome. I would love to continue to foster this culture in our division.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you the membership.

JIM PATENAUDE

Hello my name is Jim, I decided to volunteer for a board position in PSIA-NRM and am asking for your support. I have been associated with NRM since 1980 and it may have even been earlier.

I have been a member of the Red Lodge Mountain Snow Sports Center since 1980 as well. At one time, I held a level 3 certification and currently maintain a level 2. I have come to appreciate the efforts of many of you who have served on the board or have been clinicians or examiners. As a result of those efforts, I have benefited from participation in the national academy, fall feast, division and local mountain trainings, and access to on line education/information. However, the most valuable aspect of my association with PSIA-NRM is the lifelong relationships I have been able to enjoy with many of you while sharing a learning experience on the mountain.

I would like to focus on creating future events for our members that would allow for greater opportunity for each of us to say our time and financial commitment was well worth it. Regardless of the outcome of this selection process, I look forward to seeing you on the mountain and that, for me, is priceless.



PSIA-AASI NRM JOB OPPORTUNITIES

PSIA-AASI-NRM is currently recruiting to fill two positions in our administrative organization staff. With the resignation of the executive director in December we took the opportunity to review the duties and responsibilities that are associated with running PSIA-AASI-NRM. The review identified that the position was a combination of leadership/management responsibilities and administrative duties. We are changing our paid staffing organization to two positions:

An **Executive Director** position responsible for general leadership, marketing, fundraising and professional development of our membership

A **Business Manager** position responsible for the daily administrative duties of keeping the division running.

With this new structure, we are looking forward to smooth transition and are very excited for the future of NRM. Please look at the job descriptions. We hope that you might be interested or know someone with the skills to make a great fit for our division.

See PSIA-NRM.org/announcements for full job descriptions.



join our team

February 14th, 2017
@ Great Divide near Helena, MT

FREE!!

ProPark 10

- **Free!! 9am – 4pm, Costumes encouraged! Great divide is open only to event participants!!!**
- **Good Luck chair open from 10am – 3pm with 6 terrain parks!**
- **Ed credits Available - 6 credits for \$30**
- **Morning education sessions include:**
 - Park building promoting learning
 - Trick progressions
 - Freestyle Specialist Intro
 - "I've never done any of this before"
- **Lunch is provided by MSAA**
- **Pastries, Coffee, Juice on arrival.**
- **DJ Missy O'Malley on the tables!**
- **Prizes for best individual and group costumes**
- **All snowsports professionals invited!**
 - Instructors, coaches, park crews, shop/pros...
- **Must pre-register via email or phone.**
- **Registration and More Information:**
 - nrm.freestyle@gmail.com
 - www.psia-nrm.org/freestyle-specialist.html

Ride with the NRM Iron Team And
PSIA - AASI National Team Member
Ryan Christofferson



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NRM CHAIR REPORTS 2017

Children's

Zoe Mavis, NRM Children's Chair

Happy New Year! I hope all of you reading this have had an enjoyable and prosperous holiday period. With mid-season looming ahead I would like to remind everyone of the awesome events we, on the children's staff, offer. Our children specialist events not only help instructors to feel more confident and prepared for teaching kids, they help to put some creativity and fun into any lesson.

I would like to congratulate all of the candidates who have been successful in a children's specialist event so far this season. I would also like to wish good luck to those on track to participate in an event in the next few months. If you have not signed up for an event be sure to log onto the NRM website and search under events for a date and location that fits your needs. If there are any members or member schools that are interested in

adding an event to the calendar please feel free to reach out to me.

If you are looking for a fun education event to put on your schedule don't forget to sign up for our April Fools fun day clinic. There will be a resort wide scavenger hunt on the mountain and some great conversation about implementing play and fun into every lesson.

I would like to add a special thanks to Jill Chumbley who has been working very hard behind the scenes of NRM. She has helped to make my job easy and allow me to focus on all the fun stuff, like sliding around with membership!

I hope to see you out on the slopes!

Adaptive

Rebecca Starr, NRM Adaptive Chair

Here on the Adaptive side of the snow, we got off to a snowy and chilly start at the amazing Hartford Ski Spectacular at Breckenridge. As the adaptive chair it was an unforgettable opportunity to learn and ski among the best in the discipline. It was truly awesome to see such a fleet of mono-skiers, three trackers, and bi-skiers hit the snow for some early season tracks, and to watch the application and adaptation of the Five Fundamentals across adaptive disciplines. Not only has the technology expanded rapidly, but the level of instructor knowledge and involvement has pushed Adaptive snowsport instruction to new heights. Closer

to home we are happy to congratulate Chad Biggerstaff and Chris Smilek from Big Sky on their recent Adaptive Level 3 certifications. We ran a successful L2 Prep at Fall Fest, with plans for an exam either later this season or early next year. Additionally, we welcomed Jason Malczyk from Jackson Hole Adaptive as the examiner for yet another successful Level One Exam and Bridger Bowl. Given the growing interest in the adaptive discipline, we are looking forward to hosting another L1 Exam some time in March or early April.

Nordic

Mary Marshall, NRM Nordic Chair

Mid-season happened quickly this year! The Nordic Side has been busy with cross-country events including the cross-country academy at Yellowstone and certification exams occurring at Lone Mountain Ranch and currently in Whitefish. We also will be having a combined telemark NRM/Intermountain L2/3 occurring this year at Grand Targhee. This event will be held directly after World Telemark Days,

so this would be an amazing opportunity for L2/3 candidates to get some great telemark exposure prior to the event. Nordic Team member Grant Bishop will be co-leading the exam. I also want to emphasize that World Telemark Days are FREE!! This event is held at Grand Targhee., March 2-5. The event includes a big mountain competition and demos, public clinics and telemark races, 22-designs demo availability, and culminates with a telemark party Sunday 5th March. So, I definitely encourage all Nords to check this one out!

The Nordic Education Staff just had our yearly training, this year at Maverick Mountain. This was a fun day and great review of our current telemark certification process with task and demo skiing. Next year we plan to continue our tradition of Ed. staff training at small MT destination resorts! Anyone interested in being part of our Education Staff please check the NRM website for our hiring process. I also want to thank Grant Bishop for coming out to Fall Festival this year, for those who got to ski with Grant he definitely put on a great clinic.

Enjoy the rest of the season, and don't be afraid to free the heel..



Freestyle

Matt Larson, NRM Freestyle Chair

I hope your winter has been super. This winter the Iron Team has incorporated new content from the recently published Freestyle Technical Manual into the specialist program. The content has proven to be beneficial to our Freestyle Specialist participants. If you have not yet had the chance to dig into the new manual, make sure to pick up a copy or get access to the online publication. The new manual includes content regarding sports psychology, freestyle building blocks, fear, and mental performance applying to all aspects of snowsports!

ProPark 10 is here and the FS2 at Jackson is just around the corner. The FS2 workbook has been revised to include new tech manual content and bridge both ski and snowboard disciplines. Send us an email if you have interest in an FS1. Besides organizing one at your home mountain, there is one scheduled at Great Divide at the end of February. The Iron Team continues to scout for new coaches, especially skiers. Iron Team selections are coming up in April. Have a great winter!

Senior Specialist

Michael Hickey

I have always found building and implementing new snow sports programs to be both energizing and rewarding. NRM's newest credentialing offerings, the Senior Specialist 1 and 2, have been just that. The energy comes with working through the changes necessary to make the program viable while at the same time, delivering a product to the membership in a professional and fiscally responsible manner. Too, I find energy in being able to work with such a diverse group of talented individuals, the members participating in the events as well as those wishing to assist in building the programs. One of the more promising aspects of NRM's Senior Specialist Programs compared to other divisions is that it is setting up to be multi-discipline. We currently have clinicians from the Snowboard and Nordic Tele groups actively pursuing the Senior Specialist track.

To date, NRM has put on five Senior Specialist events. A Senior Specialist 2 event will be held mid-February. It seems things are off to a good start. Some of the credit for this initial success is due in part to the cooperation and assistance of our sister division, North West. We appreciate the help and encouragement of PSIA-NW and that of Michael Birch-Jones.

As for the rewards, they come in the form of membership participation, positive feedback and fiscal success. Those factors, and others should grow over time and as these events become more streamlined and fleshed out. So, be ready to join us for a Senior Specialist event beginning next year at Fall Fest.

Alpine

Tom Marshall, NRM Alpine Chair

We are re-hiring Emily Nedved to coach our IT group for another 3 year term. This group almost doubled in size this year with a lot of excellent new talent and we are looking forward to seeing some of them move into roles as NRM staff in the next few years.

Jim Anderson is newly hired to coach the Clinician staff for the next 3 years. He plans on working with that team to further develop clinics and events that our membership need across our large geographical division.

Troy Nedved and Eric Lipton have both been re-hired to coach the examiner staff. The consistency they bring to that job for another 3 years will help keep us on track in delivering quality prep clinics and fair exams.

Much of the work the coaches do for these jobs is

volunteer so please thank them for their dedication to NRM if you get a chance.

So far most of the alpine education and certification events have been filling up with only a couple of canceled events. Just a reminder, we need a minimum of 6 participants to run an event. If you are planning on signing up for an event please tell your friends and help us recruit so that we get enough members in all our events for the rest of the season. The deadline to register without paying a late fee is 2 weeks.

With good snow coverage around the division I hope you all have a busy and successful President's Weekend.

GEAR UP FOR EVERYTHING

WINTER



SPYDER

elan

BURTON

LINE



SMITH

ROSSIGNOL



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Snowboard

Bridger Biggins, NRM Snowboard Chair

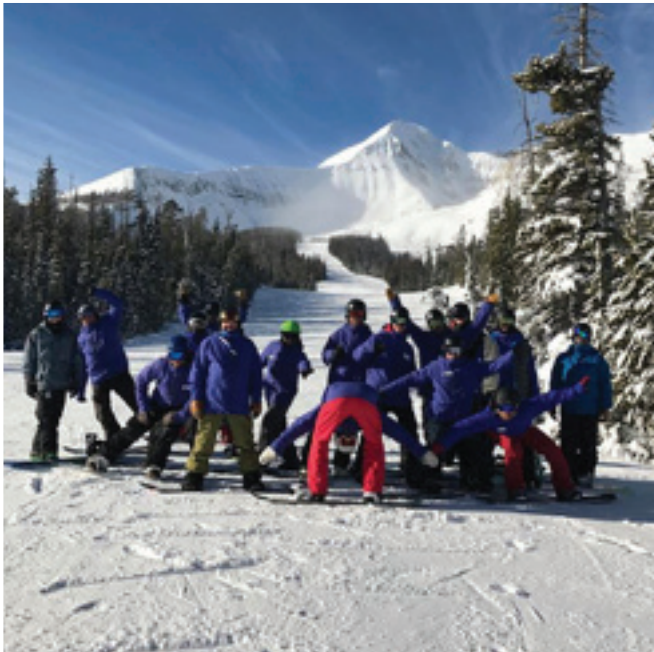
The NRM snowboard crew has been hard at work this season coming up with fun and exciting things for our membership! Ben Daniel and I were able to attend National Fall Conference in Colorado this November and had the opportunity to represent our division and bring back the ins and outs of what's going on at the national level. We had an awesome time at Fall Training and would like to thank National Team member Nick Alfieri for coming out and riding with us during Fall Fest! The Snowboard Ed Staff will be heading down to Jackson Hole February 2nd – 5th for mid-season training where we plan to elaborate on National topics and discuss how we can have more outreach in our division.

We recently finished up a round of prep clinics at Bridger Bowl and it looks like we will have a great crew for Level 2 and Level 3 exams coming up on March

2nd and 3rd at Big Sky Resort. I encourage everyone to push themselves this season and take advantage of these awesome snow conditions we have had. If there's ever been a time to go for a cert it's now!

We are currently making plans to give level 1 exams at some smaller NRM resorts in February and March. If anyone out there has some ideas of ways we can help out your area or just wants to shred feel free to reach out to the gang and I. We are all eager to travel and make appearances at smaller areas.

I hope everyone has been having an awesome year and expect to see a lot of you at Pro Park 10! (See Freestyle for details). It is shaping and up to be our best event ever! And trust me... you do not want to miss it! Regardless of what you slide on, I hope to see you there!



AASI Fall Training (Photo cred Nick Alfieri)



The 10 man turn (Photo cred Derek Wittenberg)



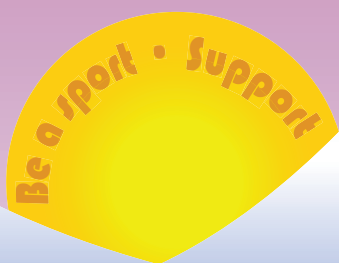
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Support Your Local Instructor



Available January 2016

When you buy this plate a portion of your fee goes to support PSIA•AASI Northern Rocky Mountain Division Education Fund



Can-Am Summit at Sun Valley

Eliza Kuntz, National Board Representative

Sun Valley, ID played host to the first ever PSIA-CSIA Can-Am Summit last month. A small group of ski instructors from the United States and Canada embarked on this world class resort for two days of skiing, comradery, and sharing of common practices. I made new friends and became a better ski teacher, focusing not only on understanding the basic fundamentals, but focusing on being an effective and inspirational facilitator.

The format was simple and effective-ski with the Americans one day and the Canadians the next. Matt Boyd represented the PSIA National Demo Team and Jeff Marks represented the Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance. Building on relationships formed through the international community at Interski, the Canadian

and American teams are using this event to solidify best practices among the countries.

There was also a wonderful program in place as well for spouses and guests of participants. This group was led by the talented divisional education staff of the Northern Intermountain Division with the highlight being a special luncheon shared with Muffy Davis, 7-time Paralympic Gold Medal Winner.

This international event was such a success that it will continue again next winter at Sun Valley.

“Before we can teach, we need to be more aware.”

--Matt Boyd, PSIA Demo Team Member

“Be direct in your task building so that students can reflect upon it and learn.”

--Jeff Marks, CSIA Demo Team Member



A Closer Look at Experiential Learning Courtesy of National Academy Session with Horst Abraham

By Rob Sogard

As one of the founders of PSIA's "student-centered" teaching approach in the mid-1970s, Horst Abraham has long been considered a pioneer in snowsports education. His 1983 book, *Skiing Right*, became a must-read and remains a great resource for anyone interested in looking beyond traditional teaching methodology. Never shy about challenging current ideas, Horst is once again prodding our beliefs about teaching, with an emphasis on experiential learning.

A CHANCE TO CHALLENGE OUR PERSONAL BELIEFS

As much as skiing itself, Horst absolutely LOVES the teaching/learning aspects of being an "instructor," a term he uses begrudgingly. He prefers the word facilitator, as he believes it better describes our role in helping students learn to ski or ride. His many credentials include former vice president of education for PSIA, president of an international consulting firm, and a position on the executive education faculty at the University of Michigan – all of which have helped mold his beliefs about how people learn, and the role of the snowsports "facilitator" as a partner in the learning process.

Over the past few years, Horst has been driving spirited debate among education specialists throughout PSIA-AASI on the thoughts, processes, and methods of experiential learning. The groundwork has been laid to bring a more experiential approach to PSIA-AASI education.

With a bit of momentum, Horst offered to lead a workshop at last April's 2016 National Academy in Breckenridge, Colorado; what better place to bring this discussion to the membership, and what better person to facilitate. For three afternoons we challenged our beliefs, checked our understanding, and discovered what we know and what we don't know about experience-driven learning.

DO WE REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE DOING?

For a small, dedicated group of participants at the National Academy session, the lure of working with Horst to delve into the meaning and methods of experiential learning was too much to resist. I stress "working with" Horst, because he does not allow passive participation. No one was there to simply listen to him lecture. We were there to be part

of the process and shape our own experience, which, as Horst will tell you, is the most effective way to learn.

The school directors, trainers, and instructors who took part in the workshop shared a common interest in experiential learning, but not necessarily a common understanding of what it means. What I discovered about myself, and our group, is that while we all believe in and value certain aspects of experiential learning, we may not understand why it is so important to motor-skill development. Because of that, we don't always use it consistently or effectively to help our students become better skiers and riders.

Translating Horst's approach to experiential learning into an article is difficult, as it must be experienced to be fully appreciated. Here, I'll offer a few highlights and some insight into his unwavering commitment to the topic, but I won't attempt to completely explain every opinion, theory, and model. In true experiential style, you may be left with as many questions as answers. It's your responsibility to seek resources as you build your knowledge and understanding. I hope his message will inspire you as he has inspired me, to question my current beliefs and evolve my ability as a facilitator of learning.

NEWS FLASH: KIDS CAN TEACH THEMSELVES

One of the tenets of experiential learning is that the facilitator needs to grab attention, raise curiosity, and draw people in. So, in Horst-like fashion, he kicked things off with an intriguing and perhaps debatable premise – delivered with video of a TED Talk by education researcher Sugata Mitra titled "Kids Can Teach Themselves." In it, Mitra tells how computer kiosks were left in a variety of locations throughout India, with no instructions, no explanation, and no teacher. Children were curious and quickly "learned" how to operate a computer, surf the web, and play computer games with no previous knowledge, no coaching, and little or no grasp of the English language. (See https://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_themselves. Mitra's "Hole in the Wall" experiment is outlined beginning at the 7:22 mark.)

Horst makes it very clear that his intent is not to eliminate the teacher from the learning process, but to reshape our role. Critical to that is the understanding that children (and, indeed, all people) will learn to do what they want to learn

to do. As facilitators, then, our first priority is to motivate and engage our students; to get them to want to learn.

I don't think many snowsports instructors would disagree, but the discussion made me wonder if my own approach to teaching could negatively affect my students desire to learn. If that's the case, what's the culprit? Horst achieved his initial goal; he got me hooked not by providing an answer but a question.

TECHNIQUE-DRIVEN VS. EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN

Horst next led us to compare technique-centered teaching and experience-driven teaching. As we combed through the characteristics of each approach (see chart), I figured most snowsports teachers would see themselves using tactics from both sides and most students would identify elements from both lists that could help them learn. So, yet again, Horst left me with a question. If both approaches are useful, why should teaching skiing and riding favor the experience-driven teaching list?

As we reviewed opinions, stories, and "best practices," I became aware of some crucial differences between the characteristics that define these two approaches:

Technique-Centered Teaching:

- Places the responsibility for learning on the teacher

- Relies predominantly on the knowledge and input of the teacher
- Often inhibits or excludes elements from the experience-centered list

Experience-Centered Teaching:

- Shares the responsibility for learning between the teacher and the student
- Relies on the knowledge and participation of both the teacher and the student
- Often includes or is enhanced by elements from the technique-centered list

I don't consider these two approaches mutually exclusive and, in practice, I think most teaching happens on a continuum between these two extremes. However, comparing the processes highlights the value of the experiential approach in creating the Learning Partnership, a cornerstone of PSIA-AASI's student-centered philosophy.

It also made me more aware of how the technique-driven approach can diminish students' participation in the process, their responsibility for learning, and perhaps even their motivation to learn. This awareness has increased my support for the experiential approach.

Table 1: Comparing Technique-Driven and Experience-Driven Teaching Approaches

Technique-Driven	Experience-Driven
Focus on technique	Focus on experience
Closed-skill methodology – Internally paced	Open-skill methodology – Externally paced
Attention is on what “should happen”	Attention is on what “is happening”
Instructor = task expert/performer	Instructor = process expert/facilitator
Process finds its power in “tell”	Process finds its power in “ask”
Emphasis on “fixing errors” (deficit)	Emphasis on building on what’s working (potential)
Instructor directs, corrects, motivates, evaluates	Instructor facilitates student autonomy
Technical, abstract language	Sensory-based/process language
Technical drills	Multi-sensory drills
Assumes everything can be taught	Understands that the most important things can only be learned
Emphasis on conformance	Emphasis on “experimentation” and “deviance”
Lesson is about physical development	Lesson is about “whole-system learning”
Learning is conformance-based – convergent	Learning is possibilities-based – divergent
Command and control	Collaborative development and ownership
Learning to ski/ride	Learning to learn using skiing/riding as a medium
Other?	Other?

MUCH MORE THAN 'JUST DO IT' METHODOLOGY

Horst's next order of business was to find out what we knew about experiential learning and why it's critical to teaching skiing, riding, or any motor skill. Most snowsports instructors value the idea that students need to be active in the learning process; that they need to "do it" to learn it. However, helping a student improve their performance demands more from the instructor than a "just do it" methodology. To be effective, an experiential approach must be well-designed and target specific outcomes using a process that supports motor-skill acquisition.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Discussions of this sort usually start with David Kolb and his four-stage experiential learning model, by which students learn through:

- concrete experience,
- reflective observation,
- abstract conceptualization, and
- active experimentation.

Our group generally understood this theory and embraced the concept, but we weren't exactly subject-matter experts. Kolb's model is based on the idea of "learning through reflection on doing." In this respect the learning cycle generally begins with a concrete experience (doing something) and is followed by reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation – which leads to improved performance and understanding.

The fact the student's understanding is a product of the experience is a very important point, and possibly where snowsports instructors may miss the mark. With the best intent, we (myself included) often start our lessons by offering more information and explanation than action, as we attempt to build the student's understanding first. In doing so, we may be inhibiting learning by overloading our student's information processing channels!

How Much Information Can a Brain Handle?

One particularly compelling element of experiential learning has to do with "channel capacity." In essence, because there are limits to how many signals (of any kind) the brain can process to make decisions and activate the muscles, too much technical information can take up brain power that might better be used for sensory input from visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and experiential stimuli. Throw in the psychological and emotional aspects of learning to ski or ride and the idea of limited channel capacity is fairly easy to comprehend. As teachers, we need to be very aware of how our contributions can either clog

or clear this channel.

Learning to ski or ride bombards our student's senses with stimuli they must either make sense of or ignore. These stimuli include the physical sensations of movements and outcomes, as well as the information, instructions, and feedback we verbally or visually communicate.

Throughout the learning process, students encounter competing priorities as our instructional directives (cognitive) fight for attention with environmental stimuli (experiential). For effective learning to occur, the instructor must maintain a delicate balance between too much or too little intervention as the student "learns."

If you offer too much or the wrong type of stimuli, cognitive processing can become overloaded as the student struggles to comprehend. If you offer too little input, experiential processing can become overwhelmed as the student gets lost in the sheer volume of new sensations from unattended practice.

Understanding that new or complex input requires more channel capacity, you can use these experiential principles to keep your instruction from interfering with learning:

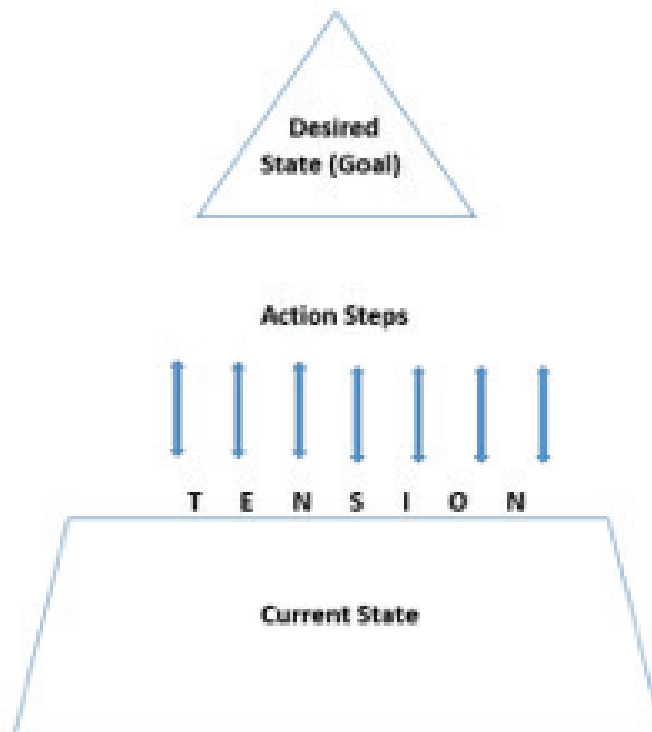
- **Avoid verbose or technically complicated instructions** that tax the limits of a student's ability to process stimuli and move effectively.
- **Use targeted questions rather than detailed directives.** This will help the student reflect on what "is happening" (familiar) rather than what "should be happening" (unfamiliar). Familiarity makes it easier and faster to recognize and process stimuli.
- **Use purposefully designed experiences** which follow the principles of basic sequencing (simple to complex, static to dynamic, familiar to unfamiliar), which also speeds up the recognition of stimuli.

How Do You Get Students from Point A to Point B?

Debating the finer points of learning theory is one thing, putting them into practice is quite another. To see how we'd apply the concepts we'd been discussing to a "real life" scenario, Horst presented a simple model of goal setting and action steps (figure 1). He asked us to pick a target audience (beginner, intermediate, or advanced student) and use the structural tension process to define the current state and the desired state of the student, and to identify the steps to help them get from point A (current) to point B (desired). This was a basic exercise in experiential lesson planning, and one with which our group struggled a bit as our "traditional" methodology influenced our process.

The idea of structural tension offers a simple approach

Structural Tension



to any situation where desired performance differs from current reality. The process starts by assessing current performance and accurately defining the goal.

This in itself is nothing new. However, once the goal is defined, common practice is to start right in on the steps to change performance. This is where structural tension and experience-driven learning differ. With the latter, the next step is not to embark on change, but to spend more time and effort realizing the current state. This part of the process is critical for the student, and critical to learning a motor sport (see “The Austrian Approach: Ditch the Explanations and Let Students Explore,” Spring 2016, page 28).

Using this approach, it becomes much easier for the teacher to follow principles of experiential methodology as we focus the student on what “is happening.” We use questions rather than instructions to clarify current performance and outcomes; we encourage experimentation and deviation rather than conformity to technique; and we help them move from familiar to unfamiliar stimuli. Through this process, new movements or unknown concepts are not

introduced by the teacher, they arise from the student’s perception and performance, allowing them to more easily participate in the process of change.

WORKSHOP PLANTS THE SEED FOR FUTURE EXPLORATION

Three short afternoons in this National Academy workshop offered great direction as I continue to explore experience-driven learning. I don’t feel this approach demands a wholesale change in my methodology – or in the philosophy of PSIA-AASI – but it will require a change in how we apply student-centered teaching. Hopefully, you gained enough insight to inspire your own understanding of experiential learning.

Rob Sogard served as a member of the PSIA Alpine Team for five terms (1996-2016), including 12 years as the team’s coach (2004-2016). He is the assistant general manager at Utah’s Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort.

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Setting Realistic Expectations for Children/Athletes, The Case Against Angulation

**Paul Mannelin, BSSEF U14 Head Coach, USSA Level 300, PSIA Level 3,
USSA Clinic Instructor/PSIA-NRM Ed Staff**

As we drive forward into the meat of our competition season, it's a great time to think about what does good ski technique look like for all of our different aged athletes. We often look to our World Cup star athletes for guidance on what good skiing looks like, and with good reason! These guys rip, and are a ton of fun to watch!

As we look to Mikaela Shiffrin and Ted Ligety however, we need to be careful making assumptions about their skiing ability and the strength and agility needed to support that level of skiing as it relates to the physical capabilities of our children/athletes. Are there similarities between a 9 year old and Ted Ligety? Certainly. But what is reality and what is ideal?

We expect that our kids balance against the outside ski, just like Ted. He will however, create significantly larger edge angles to accomplish what he needs to do in a World Cup GS course. We would generally like to see younger kids more aligned over their skis with much less angulation to maintain balance throughout the turn. When we ask children to make angles similar to our World Cup athletes, bad habits can and often do become prevalent. The strength to efficiently resist the forces generated by large edge angles just isn't there in younger athletes.

At 9 years old, some kids (but not all) are developing the ability to turn their feet separate of their pelvis like Mikaela Shiffrin does so well. Mikaela will have her "zipper down the hill" to a much greater extent than would a younger athlete. But we can and do still look for some upper/lower body separation in order to maintain rotational balance from children.

We ask our young athletes to control pressure over the length of the ski, but certainly not to the extent that our World Cup stars can. That will look different with Ted Ligety than the average U10. Because of their incredible strength, elite athletes will direct a lot of pressure to the front of the skis in the top of the turn, bending their skis into submission through the belly of the turn. We certainly look for pressure directed to the front of the ski from our younger athletes, however movements similar

to World Cup athletes without the strength to back them up end with less than stellar results.

Bad habits that develop from young athletes trying to mimic their favorite World Cup stars often include loss of pressure on the outside ski, large edge angles in the bottom of the turn when we want the ski to be releasing, skidding skis rather than cleanly tracking skis, or a body position that is generally farther back than we would like to see. We as coaches need to tread lightly when we point to our top skiing stars for things like angulation, and be careful when we say things like "feel the pinch" to follow that up with specifics about where in the turn, for how long, and how much is enough (more is not necessarily better). When we tell a U8 athlete to keep their zipper down the hill, often what results is shoulders facing down the hill with hips/pelvis following the skis. The resulting twist in the spine leaves the young athlete less able to manage forces in the turn.

Is a 9 year old capable of making his or her body do what a Ted or Mikaela need to do? Of course not! Top athlete's movements are intended for making it down a very steep, icy course with a ton of offset between each gate. Does that mean we can't expect precise and accurate movement patterns from our kids? Not at all. Of course we can, and do! This also doesn't mean we shouldn't have our kids watching high level ski racing. I strongly encourage kids to watch World Cup ski racing! It's incredibly exciting to watch, and amazing for inspiring the next generation. We just need to be realistic about the physical development and capabilities of our children. We have to set realistic expectations for our athletes, and make certain we aren't creating bad habits that could be difficult to fix later on down the road.



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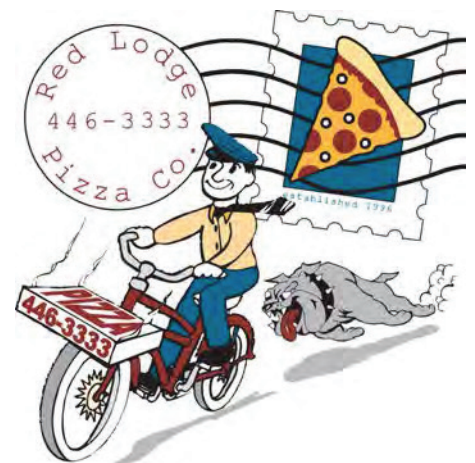
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