

BUSTING BLISTERS > UNKNOWN ROCK STARS > YOUNG SKIERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT > CALENDAR OF OUTDOOR EVENTS

VERMONT SPORTS MAGAZINE

Vermont's Authority on Outdoor Fitness and Adventure



JANUARY 2011
VOLUME XX | NO. III

FREE!

GETTING DERBY-IZED

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Ruud Vekemans

On the cover: Tim Donahue (67) of Nashua, NH, Joel Bradley (16) of New York City, NY, and Marc Gilbertson (70) of Morrisville, VT, at the 2010 TDBank North Craftsbury Marathon, to be held this year on January 29. For another perspective of the marathon, see 10-time Craftsbury Marathon participant Paul Bierman's interview on page 17. Photo by Kate Carter.

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THIS MONTH ON VTSports.COM

SHIRES OF VERMONT MARATHON



With Bennington County's two Shire towns
marking their 250th anniversaries next year,
local running enthusiasts are planning a
26.2-mile marathon for May 15, 2011, that
will connect the South and North Shires,
and raise money for a good cause. Find out
more at www.vtsports.com/articles/shires-vermont-marathon - will mark 250th-
anniversary-bennington-manchester.

BUILDING YOUR BASELINE, TRIMMING YOUR WAISTLINE USING THE WINTER WISELY

By Declan Connolly, Ph.D, FACSM, CSCS*

Are you coming off the holiday season with
a few extra pounds and a bunch of missed
workouts? If so, in your haste to remedy the
weight issue you should literally slow down
and consider a few points. Read how to use
winter to your advantage to build your base
and trim your waist at [www.vtsports.com/
articles/building-your-baseline-trimming-
your-waistline-using-winter-wisely](http://www.vtsports.com/articles/building-your-baseline-trimming-your-waistline-using-winter-wisely).

CARBON OFFSETS AND GREEN RACING

By Tim Reynolds



Finding ways to make a professional ski
team "green" is a tough job. On one hand
we've made a commitment to developing
young skiers into international competitors.
On the other, we've also made environmen-
tal initiatives and awareness an equally
important goal. It's a difficult position to
be in. Find out why at [www.vtsports.com/
articles/carbon-offsets-and-green-racing](http://www.vtsports.com/articles/carbon-offsets-and-green-racing).





**EDITOR
COMMENTARY**
BY
KATE CARTER

LOST AND FOUND

I'm on a roll. Starting this past October I've found a nice collection of items that people have lost on trails or at trailheads. I am happy to return these goodies to their rightful owners, so, as you read this column, if you think I've found something that is yours, all you have to do is contact me and tell me where you lost it. No location identification, no reclamation. With that in mind, I will refrain from naming trails or trailheads in the following litany.

It all started on a cool rainy day in early October at a nearby haunt, where I met a friend and we took our dogs for a walk. Upon returning to our cars we both spotted something colorful lying in the parking area. An umbrella! A very nice umbrella. Since I've been without an umbrella most of my life, I got to claim the prize.

Not long after that, in another favorite haunt, I found a small camera bag. It's nothing I can use, since my cameras are big and this bag is for one of those small point-and-shoots, and I can't even use it to store film, since that's ancient history, so I'm really hoping someone will claim it. Un-

til then, it's bouncing around in the back of my car.

The next find was a major score. Draped over a low-growing shrub at a scenic attraction trailhead I found a Columbia Titanium technical jacket, men's large. This was during peak foliage, and I suspect a visitor on a bus tour misplaced it. I rifled through all the pockets—and there were a lot of them—looking for identification, and it occurred to me that someone had already done that because all the zippers were unzipped. I took it home and placed a “found” ad in the local paper. I got one response, but the caller was looking for something else, so I still have the jacket. It's brown and gray, which are not my colors, so it's become a yard jacket. It's become my jacket of choice when I do things around the yard in the rain—clean up the last of the garden debris, fill potholes in the driveway with the load of stay-mat I had dumped in the parking area, pick up all the agility equipment that's strewn around the yard and drag it to the garage for winter storage—that sort of thing.

Then came the surprise find right in the middle of a closed road. I was

on another dog walk with the above-mentioned umbrella friend and we had reached the turn-around point of our walk. We saw something that looked like a crumpled Bud Lite beer can on the ground, half covered with ice and snow. Good Samaritan that she is, my friend thought she should pack it out. She bent over to pick it up and Lo! A headlamp! And it worked! The headband was missing, which probably explains its separation from its owner. Since I got the umbrella, she got the headlamp.

I can't help but wonder about all this lost stuff I'm finding, but I'm writing it off as payback. I've lost plenty of stuff myself, usually by putting it on top of the car and driving off. Once I found a very nice Buck knife right in the middle of Route 100. I figured that was replacement for the Swiss Army Knife I lost when it went flying off the roof of my car in a sharp turn. Same thing happened with a nice pair of Bolle sunglasses. I even did it with my wallet at a gas station. When I got home and realized my wallet was gone I retraced my steps and found it on the edge of the road. It had been run over a few times, but was still in-

tact. I don't put stuff on top of my car anymore, but it's taken some serious discipline to keep myself from doing that. Maybe if I had a different car with a higher roof, instead one that's at such a convenient height, it wouldn't be such a problem.

There was a slight lull in my recent stuff-finding streak, but sure enough, it happened again. After a short hike up a nearby trail, I returned to my car. It was getting dark, but I could just make out a small lump in the parking lot. It looked like it had been there a few days—snow-covered with tire tracks over it. I snagged it with my hiking pole tip and took a closer look. As luck would have it, it was a Smartwool beanie, and a great color—purple! Beanies usually give me wicked hat head, but this one looks really nice, and it's not so tight that my face looks like it's popping out of a grape. I'll probably wear it. Unless it's yours. If you think it is, send me an email, editor@vtsports.com, and tell me where I found it. ¶

—Kate Carter



**OUT &
ABOUT**
BY
JOHN MORTON

A FEW SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2010

Before anticipating a brand new year of sporting thrills and spills, I can't help a quick glance back at some of the major sports stories of 2010. I apologize in advance, since my interest rarely coincides with conventional wisdom. For example, I understand that the biggest story of the year for many sports fans was LeBron James' defection from Cleveland to Miami. I empathize with the Cleveland fans, but beyond that, yawn....

Ten months after the fact, I still have wonderful memories of the Vancouver Winter Olympics. For starters, the Canadians did a super job organizing the Games, as I had confidence they would since Calgary, back in 1988, was such a success. In spite of uncharacteristically warm, wet weather, the events went off on schedule. Sadly, the opening days of the competitions were marred by the tragic death of a luge rider from the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Although, at the time there was plenty of finger pointing to assign blame for the accident, I'm not sure if it was ever determined whether the athlete was experienced enough for top-level international competition, or whether the International Luge Federation was push-

ing the limits of the run in an effort to make their sport more exciting for television.

United States skiers and snowboarders turned in their strongest performance in Winter Olympic history. Lindsey Vonn and Julie Mancuso were impressive in the women's alpine events, while Bode Miller toned down his controversial antics and simply skied well. Shaun White continued his domination of the men's halfpipe, but the real fireworks were delivered by a trio of U.S. Nordic combined skiers who commanded the podium after years of being so very close.

Let me add a couple of fleeting memories of the Vancouver Games. The International Olympic Committee should have let the women jump. Although they may be few in number internationally, the gals who have been ski jumping have clearly demonstrated their dedication and capability. In fact, I suspect that may have been the issue; they are so good, the tough old boys overseeing international ski jumping were probably afraid the girls were going to float farther down the hill than the guys.

A second memory was of two ice hock-

ey games—the original USA-Canada men's battle where the American goalie kept his teammates in the contest, and the gold medal event where the Canadians reestablished their claim to their national pastime.

Although I'm not a fanatic football fan, I was captivated by the Saints' Super Bowl victory. New Orleans seems to have endured so many hardships recently, and for many years the Saints were so pathetic that even getting to the Super Bowl was fantasy. But, in spite of (perhaps because of) the hardships, the team rose on a groundswell of local support and won the Lombardi Trophy. Hollywood couldn't have concocted a more inspiring story line.

Speaking of inspiration, I enjoyed following the World Cup Soccer events from South Africa. Although the games themselves may not keep me on the edge of my seat, it's impressive to consider how many of the world's population are joined in their passion for the sport. I can't think of another event, except perhaps the Summer Olympics, that involves the people of all the continents so completely.

Of course the year had its share of

bad news as well. The revelations about Tiger Woods' private life seemed at first unbelievable, and then agonizingly painful. He may eventually recover his prowess on the golf course, but as a person he has forever lost the respect and admiration of millions.

It was this past year that former slugger Mark McGuire finally admitted to using steroids in the 1998 season when he eclipsed Roger Maris' 37-year-old home run record. I suppose McGuire deserves credit for finally fessing up, but 13 years seems like a long time for his conscience to kick in. Maybe he'll inspire Roger Clemens to come clean....

Oh, and the winner of the Tour de France was busted for doping, but that's not news, it happens every year.

Here's hoping 2011 starts off with cold temperatures and lots of snow! ¶

John Morton is a former Olympic biathlete and Nordic ski coach. He lives in Thetford Center, VT, where he designs Nordic ski trails. You can reach him through his website, www.mortontrails.com.

GET TO KNOW AN UNKNOWN ROCK STAR

**RETAIL JUNKIE
SUPERSTAR**
BY
RYAN JAMES LECLERC



I once mentioned to Bart, my hands-down favorite fellow coworker, that I am a rock star. I wasn't kidding around; I was being serious. Being rooted in logic and reason, he of course went into immediate argument mode, disputing my claim with piles of tangible evidence that proves his contradiction to be sound. He was being literal and I understand that. No, as Bart pointed out, I am not a successful performer with millions of dollars nor am I a celebrated talent with legions of adoring fans. And no, I am not a heralded axe man with racks of Gibson Les Paul guitars piled in the back of my black and gold colored tour bus and I am certainly not a bestselling artist with racks of multiple Grammy awards piled in the trophy room of my rock star mansion.

Yes, I do work at a bike shop and yes I am lousy at playing guitar and even worse at playing bass. And it is true that, not counting my lovely wife, I have zero adoring fans. My rock star mansion may currently be a humble abode and my tour bus may be a blue and rust colored Subaru, but that doesn't matter. I am still a rock star. I'm just not a *real* rock star.

Maybe Bart could wrap his head around the idea if I had said that I'm a different type of rock star. I am an unknown rock star, and I am not alone. There are two other unknown rock stars—Crash Davis and Bash Baker—

who also work at the shop. And the three of us are in an unknown rock band.

Any retail junkie who has ever attended a sales seminar and lived to tell about it has probably sat through the "Be a Rock Star" motivational speech. The motivational speaker is referring to another type of a rock star, the sales floor chart topper if you like, who welcomes customers within 20 seconds or 20 feet from walking in the door, who tactfully suggests and successfully sells custom insoles with every footwear purchase, and who embraces boring tasks that everyone else avoids, like making a compelling display for inner tubes or Presta valve adapters. Every shop needs these types of rock stars, and we have them in our ranks, but this is not the kind of rock star that I claim to be. (Although if the boss asks, please tell him that I am that type, too).

Most of us who work at the shop have a lot in common and we do a lot of activities together outside of work. We ride bikes together and then we drink beers together. We ski mountains together and then we drink beers together. When we're not playing in the great outdoors, we go to the Three Penny Taproom together and then we drink beers while complaining about being broke together. We are coworkers, but we are also good friends, which is one of the things that I appreciate most about my job.

And then there are a few of us, the


unknown rock stars, who do something else, something a little different together, something that doesn't involve exercise or high speeds or anything having to do with the products that we sell or the active, outdoor lifestyle we promote. Once a week, usually on Thursday nights, Crash and Bash and I set up in the basement of the bike shop and rock out together. Crash plays the drums, Bash sings and plays the guitar, and I play the bass, and we all drink beers. For a few hours, nothing else in the world matters. No, we don't have a record deal. No, we don't a gig lined up. No, we don't have a name, but when we're playing music in the basement of the bike shop and we turn up the volume of our amplifiers enough to drown out the boiler, and I manage to play a few correct notes in a row, there is a magical feeling that only rock stars like us get to experience. The feeling is so intense, that I would break into real rock star poses and throw my arm in the air and jump up and down if I wasn't worried about knocking over Frank's repair stand.

This magical feeling carries over to the next day and stays with us. This is important, because even though there is no other job we'd rather be doing, work at the shop can at times be challenging, like when a customer wants to return long underwear because after a day of snowshoeing, they weren't breathable enough. It can be stressful, like when

you realize that you have more high-end racing poles in stock than you can realistically sell in a year, or three years for that matter. And it can be monotonous, like when you check the time and it's a half hour earlier than when you checked it a half hour ago. All these things can grind you down, but when you're an unknown rock star, you can strike a power chord in your brain and the challenges, stress, and monotony of the daily grind become a bit easier to deal with.

To all the unknown rock stars out there, keep rocking and rolling. To all the sales floor chart toppers out there, keep selling and restocking. And to all the real rock stars out there, look out. As soon as I learn how to play better and we come up with a name, we're coming after your Grammys. ¶

Ryan James Leclerc has worked in retail longer than you. Although he has recently made the move from the sales floor to the office of Onion River Sports, he likes to reminisce about the good old days using the present tense narrative. He lives in Burlington with his lovely wife Mckalyn. You can reach him at ryanleclerc@hotmail.com.



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SPORTS MEDICINE

BY
ROBERT RINALDI, DPM

BUSTING BLISTERS

More than 400,000 athletes participate in marathons every year. In the shorter distances, participation is well into the millions. All this running, just in the United States! Training miles for these runners must be an awesome figure.

The injury most frequently treated in running race medical tents is the painful friction blister. Consider these statistics:

- An estimated 39 percent of runners experience disability from blistering feet during a race.
- The United States military records show blister treatment for over 40 percent of all inductees in training.
- An estimated 50 percent of hikers and backpackers suffer from blisters.
- The friction blister is common, painful, and disabling, yet prevention and treatment are still fixed on a paradigm of traditions that was set more than 30 years ago.

BLISTER DANGER

With blisters, pain may be the most minor of problems. Blisters can become infected, leading to sepsis, cellulites, and even toxic shock. With a high potential for serious complication it is a wonder that more attention has not been placed on prevention. Understanding the pro-

cess of formation may debunk some longstanding myths about blister treatment.

The blister begins with a tearing of the top three layers of the skin—stratum corneum, stratum lucidum, and stratum granulosum—from the underlying stratum spinosum. The skin's lowest basal cell layer and dermis remain unharmed. The space created from the tear fills with a "blister fluid" that is very similar to plasma. The original tear is caused by a shearing force or frictional force that develops between the skin and an object that has less mobility and greater tensile strength. Once the plasma-like fluid fills the space it will actually begin to add insult to injury by further dissecting tissue as it moves about, making the blister larger.

Frictional forces are important in the process of movement and for the foot to work normally. These forces will help develop stability and traction, working with the enormous amount of neuro-receptors on the plantar aspect of the human foot. Frictional force will increase with heat or moisture. Exercise will increase metabolic activity and cause heat build-up. Studies have shown that as little as a four-degree increase in heat will increase blister formation by 50 percent. Skin temperature on the plantar aspect of the foot will increase by six degrees

with just plain walking. That said, understanding the reason for formation of the friction blister has offered little help in the prevention of blisters.

DEBUNKING OLD WIVES' TALES

Folk medicine lore is replete with tips and tricks for the prevention of the friction blister. Sadly, most of the remedies have been shown to offer little help in resolving the dilemma. Exhaustive studies performed by the U. S. Army have shown that applying an antiperspirant to the sole of the foot not only did not prevent blistering, but added the possibility of an allergic skin response to the products used.

Another popular blister prevention trick is to use a moisture-absorbing powder, such as cornstarch. A premium-grade baby powder was most popular, but studies found that the talc or cornstarch absorbed moisture and also the sharp edges of the particles, which would further irritate the skin, resulting in the formation of a blister.

Finally, the use of lubricants such as petroleum jelly, K-Y Jelly, and a product that was marketed as Unpetroleum Jelly were tested. The results showed that in most cases the formation of the blister was increased.

SHOES AND SOCKS

The solution for blister prevention might be found in footwear. Think of the shoe as a glove on your foot. If the glove is too large it will be cumbersome and give your hand only fumbling protection. Work will be out of the question since all dexterity will be lost. Conversely, if the glove is too tight it will constrict blood flow, impinge nerve endings, and generally be very uncomfortable.

So it is with a shoe. A shoe that is too loose will increase the chances of blisters, since the foot will move about

inside the shoe. At heel-strike the foot will begin its slide forward and at toe-off the shoe will begin a track backwards. As the skin warms up and moisture increases, the foot will literally be sloshing around in the shoe. When the shoe is too tight it will increase friction on the skin almost immediately. The shoe must fit properly; it can be neither too tight nor too loose.

I always suggest that you shop for your athletic foot wear in a quality sport shop with trained staff. We are blessed here in Vermont with Skirack in Burlington, Onion River Sports in Montpelier, and Stateline Sports in West Lebanon, NH. You could not find better staff to meet your fit needs.

The final answer to blister prevention may be in the socks. Studies have shown that acrylic fibers are best, blowing cotton fibers out of the running. High-grade acrylic fiber with minimal underfoot padding combined with shoe insoles constructed with closed cell neoprene fiber such as Spenco has shown to reduce blistering as much as 25 percent.

BLISTERING SUMMARY

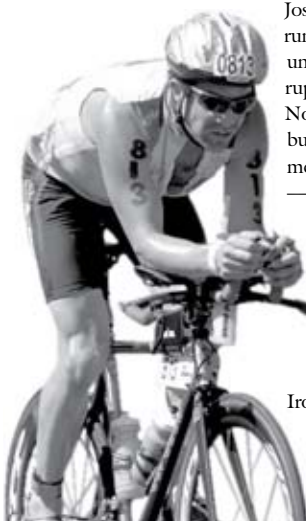
Close to nothing is worse than a blister in the long run. Though there is no cure nor prevention, the next best thing is to use athletic shoes that are appropriate for your foot type, and control hyperpronation if necessary. Equally important—use thin, high-grade acrylic socks.

If you get a blister it is best to stop your activity. Leaving the fluid in the blister will cause it to get larger in a process called fluid dissection, so I recommend opening the blister in several places, allowing it to drain, then apply Betadine solution to help prevent infection. Betadine also acts as a drying, dehydrating solution. Finally, do not cover the wound with a bandage, so it can dry and heal. ☐

Robert Rinaldi is a board-certified podiatrist and podiatric surgeon at the Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, VT. He is a fellow and a founding member of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, and a podiatric consultant to the Dartmouth College track and cross-country teams. He is a former nationally ranked long-distance runner, having competed in 25 world-class marathons. You can reach him at Gifford Sports Medicine and Surgery Clinics in Randolph, VT, or at the Sharon Health Clinic in Sharon, VT, 802-728-2490 or 802-763-8000 or at rrinaldi@giffordmed.org.

Josh Kahan. *Father, computer company owner, Ironman*

Josh avoided surgery and got back to competing



Josh Kahan had just three miles left to run in an Ironman triathlon being held under the hot Kentucky sun when he ruptured two tendons in one ankle. Normally, surgery would be the solution, but his Sharon Health Center sports medicine provider offered new hope—platelet-rich plasma therapy (PRP).

PRP is simple injections of the healing components of your own blood into injured joints. Two PRP treatments later and Josh was back to racing. He did two half-Ironmans and two full Ironmans last year, and planned to do the same this year—pain-free. "I'm ecstatic," says Josh. "To me, it's been an incredibly positive experience. It saved my season."

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SKIING INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

18 & UNDER
BY
CHRIS KELLER



When it comes to big-time sports, it is exceedingly rare for athletes from Vermont to excel on a national stage. Our diminutive state might be able to go toe-to-toe against its 49 big brothers in maple syrup production, but when it comes to producing national-class athletes, we just do not stack up.

Nevertheless, the Green Mountain State does have its sporting niches, one of the most prominent ones being cross-country skiing. Sure, Bill Koch and Liz Stephen might not be household names to most Americans, but they have helped put Vermont on the map nonetheless. Our flair for putting Nordic skiers in the national spotlight shows no sign of slowing down, either, thanks to an abundance of talented young ski racers across the state. So what should you do the next time your relatives from New Hampshire dare you to name one athlete from Vermont who is making national headlines? You should look them dead in the eye and tell them about Hannah Miller and Jack Hegman, two of our state's most talented adolescent cross-country skiers.

Like most home-schooled students, Hannah Miller is not lacking in the intrinsic motivation department. Despite the dearth of teachers and peers to push her, the 16-year-old from Elmore manages to get done everything she needs to get done. "I kind of look at what I have to do by the end of the year and do what I have to do based on that," she says. Naturally, this inner focus lends itself well to Nordic skiing: coincidentally, Hannah is no slouch on the ski trails. Hannah, who trains with the Craftsbury junior team, raced well at Junior Olympics last season. Duking it out against the best skiers in the country, she qualified for the fastest heat of the classic sprints, making her one of the top six skiers in the nation in that discipline.

Hannah and her older sister Kaitlynn, a freshman on the Bowdoin College ski team, have been immersed in the sport for as long as they can remember. "I've been cross-country skiing since I was two," she said. "My mom got



Jack Hegman

me and my sister out there before we really knew what we were doing." Part of this exposure stems from the fact that her mom works at Trapp Family Lodge, where Hannah trains when she isn't skiing with her Craftsbury teammates. "My sister and I work there as well," she adds.

Despite her extensive exposure to cross-country skiing, Hannah sports a mature sense of perspective that belies her notable success in the sport. "I would not want to go to a ski school," she says. "For me, personally, I wouldn't want to dedicate my entire life to racing. It's a great hobby, but I wouldn't necessarily want to go to school for racing." The standout skier is also well-traveled: she hopes to do a gap year in India before college and went hiking in Scotland last summer. "The highlight of my hiking trip to Scotland was spending three solid weeks with my sister and mom. Getting to see a country from the perspective of walking through it as opposed to driving was really cool, too."

Hannah was not the only Vermonter to stand out at the 2010 Junior



Hannah Miller

Olympics. Huntington's Jack Hegman finished in the top ten in all four of his races, including a second-place finish in the 5-kilometer classic event and a win in the freestyle relay. The junior at Mount Mansfield Union High School hopes to build off that success this season. "I'm really excited for the upcoming season," he says. "I'm excited to see how I'll do in the Eastern Cup Races. There were a total of eight races last year and I won the first four and finished second in the last four." Because he is making the transition from a J2 to a J1, Jack's races will be five to ten kilometers longer than they were last year, a transition he says he is eager to make. "I like longer distances better. I do better the longer the race."

Like the Millers, cross-country skiing seems to run in the Hegman family gene pool. Jack's older brother Peter is a sophomore on the University of Vermont ski team while his younger brother Ben is a freshman on the MMU team. "We compare year to year where we were," Jack says of an ongoing competition with his older brother. "We can add up our places and see who was the better skier. My freshman year he won and beat me by a couple points, but my sophomore year I beat him. I think it will be really close again this season because my brother had a really good junior year."

Despite the friendly rivalry between the siblings, Jack lists Peter as one of the reasons he picked up skis in the first place. "I saw my brother racing since when he was young. He was fast and I wanted to be like him. I looked up to him and watched his races closely. He helped me be a much better skier and helped me love the sport."

In 10 years, Hannah Miller and Jack Hegman probably won't grace the cover of Sports Illustrated. (Not many people from Vermont do, in case you haven't noticed.) One thing is for sure, however: if they keep skiing their way into the spotlight, they'll sustain Vermont's rich cross-country skiing tradition and help keep the Green Mountain State on the map. ▢

Chris Keller is a senior at Montpelier High School. His hobbies including, running, hiking, listening to music, and eating jars of peanut butter. If you know someone age 18 or under who would be a good candidate for this column, feel free to email Chris at kellerc@mpsvt.org.



**THE VERMONT SPORTS ANNUAL
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See page 22
for more info

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Getting Derby-ized

BY KIRK KARDASHIAN



Glenn Callahan

When I first heard about the Stowe Derby a few years ago, it sounded like one of those crazy Yankee traditions that's more guts and idiocy than anything else. "You ski down Mansfield on Nordic skis?" I recall asking my friend, who informed me of the event. "I bet I would break something." I took a pass.

Turns out, the race began as a bet in 1945, but one that displayed the "can-do" spirit of the Greatest Generation, not the sullen sarcasm of mine.

Sepp Ruschp, an Austrian-born ski racer who turned Stowe into a world-class resort, wagered that he could make it from the top of the Mount Mansfield Toll Road down to the Village of Stowe faster than his friend Erling Strom, a famous ski-mountaineer. Strom put in a good fight, but Ruschp won the day.

Sixty-six years later, the Stowe Derby is still going strong. In fact, Pascale Savard, who organizes the race for the Mount Mansfield Ski Club, expects 1,000 participants on race day this year, which is scheduled for Sunday, February 27.

The course covers 16 kilometers and drops over 3,000 vertical feet from the top of the Lookout lift to the white-steeple church in Stowe. Fancy yourself tough? Then choose the Derby-Meister, where you do the course twice: once on skate skis and the other on classic gear.

The most important rule is that racers must complete the route using only one pair of skis. Why? Because the trail descends steadily from the top and then undulates before turning pancake-flat for the final six kilometers. Which makes picking your equipment a little tricky. You're free to use a pair of alpine skis, but you'll never make up enough time on the downhill to hold off the packs of Lycra-clad Nordic skiers double-poling and V2-ing their way to the finish line. The best tactic, according to Cap Chenoweth, a Stowe resident who's completed 30 Derbys, is to use cross-country skis, play it safe and steady on the first part of the course, and then ski hard to the end.

That was my plan last February, when curiosity about the race overcame my instincts of self preservation.

The weirdness of this activity first hits you when you get on the chairlift and your skinny skis dangle over black diamond runs littered with moguls.

"Going this fast on skinny skis doesn't feel right, but you shut off that inner voice and push on."

STOWE DERBY

When: Feb. 27

Where: Mount Mansfield

Register:

www.stowederby.com

by: Feb. 22

Cost: \$30 to \$90

More info:

(802) 253-7704

racers go off. Their order has been determined by last year's results, and these guys look serious.

Soon it is my turn, and I line up with about seven or eight others. Some are wearing Lycra; a woman is wearing a frilly skirt; and I'm somewhere in between. The beeps start and we take off. I get into second position on the first straightaway, and then take the first couple of switchbacks cleanly. The snow is firm but grippy and it makes for solid turning. It feels like a skier-cross race at this point, with big switchback turns and people jockeying for position, but soon enough the places get sorted out.

After the first two turns there's a long straightaway, and people in-the-know get into a tuck and pick up speed. I follow suit. Then we do a few turns and traverse another straight section. Going this fast on skinny skis doesn't feel right, but you shut off that inner voice and push on.

The woman in the frilly skirt passes me, then crashes on a turn and I pass her (she was fine). Soon we are at the top of the powerline, a long, straight section that drops down into the Stowe Mountain Resort Cross Country Ski Center. We make a hard right, with an off-camber corner, and enter the forested cross-country trails. Here we start climbing gradually on the Timberlane Trail, and then the Burt Trail, cross

On top, things start to make more sense. The sun is peeking through clouds, and bunches of Nordic skiers are milling around. Some take off up the slope to stay warm, others soak up the experience and steel themselves for the trip down. I wait near the start line to see the first wave of

the wooden bridge, and then turn left onto Ranch Camp. This climbs even more and takes us over the ridge to the Trapp Family Lodge land.

I pass a few folks at this point, but soon realize that I've miscalculated my effort. My heart rate is firmly in the red zone now and I hope to not get passed by those whom I've just overtaken. In a few minutes, one guy passes me and skis up the hill. I try to follow, but he just walks away and I resign myself to a sustainable rhythm.

By now, my legs are tired (I hadn't considered the effect of all that downhill skiing) and my form suffers. The track, too, isn't pristine, and the combination of slippery, choppy snow wreaks havoc on my muscles. I flail and gyrate and just try to keep some semblance of forward momentum.

Exiting the cross-country trails, I come to a wide open field basking in the sun. At the upper parking lot for the Rec Path, people are ringing cow bells and cheering. I smile, grunt and keep going. I cross the river three times, poling over the narrow bridges, then reach the Mountain Road, where a line of cars is stopped and waiting for me. I speed up so as to look like I'm really trying, and ski across the narrow tongue of snow covering the macadam.

The tall white steeple of the church comes into view. It's a welcome sight. I ski as hard as I can, which isn't too hard, and smile as I cross the finish. What a feeling!

I'm bumbling and dizzy, sort of in a daze from the effort. My time was good enough for 139th place. Not great, but not terrible, either. My goal was to not crash on the downhill and ski hard to the finish, and that's what I did.

Will I do the Derby next year? You bet. ▢

Kirk Kardashian is a freelance journalist who lives in Woodstock. You can see more of his work at www.kirkkardashian.com.



IF THE BOOT FITS, SKI IT!

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BOB LOCICERO

Many skiers will tell you the best part of skiing is taking their boots off at day's end. It's a shame: it doesn't have to be that way. Why live with pain if you don't have to?

Finding comfortable ski boots that work properly isn't easy. Boots must fit tightly to efficiently transfer muscle movement to the skis, but tight-fitting boots can hurt. Ski boots are designed to fit a generic foot that no one has. The result is a compromise, fitting comfortably in some places, while pinching, pressuring, and hurting in others.

"Boots that are too big are the biggest problem we see," says PJ Dewey, master boot fitter and owner of Race Stock Sports in Waterbury. "People try on boots and pick the one that doesn't hurt when sitting around the shop. The liner packs out and they end up with boots that are too big," he explains.

Dewey knows boots. He was a boot technician for Lange Racing on the World Cup ski tour before starting Race Stock Sports in 1993. Race Stock now specializes in crafting boots for ski racers and advanced recreational skiers.

A stock ski boot is a starting point, not a finished product. An expert boot fitter, such as Dewey, begins by finding a boot that is close to the skier's needs and then changes the boot to fit. Dewey says pressure, not pain, defines a good fit.

SHELL SELECTION

Dewey begins by finding a shell that fits and has a flex that matches the skier's weight. To find the correct length, he has the skier step into a "cut-away"—a shell cut down to just above the sole—and slide his or her foot forward to touch the front end. The size is right if no more than two fingers can be placed between the heel and shell.

The flex of a ski boot shell is determined by the thickness and composition of its plastic. Manufacturers assign a number that indicates the stiffness relative to the other boots in their line. The numbers are only meaningful within a line and cannot be used to compare boots from different manufacturers.

Shell flex is important because it determines how much effort is required to bend it while skiing. Temperature affects flex, and manufacturers design for different median temperatures. For Vermont skiers, Dewey selects boots that perform well at 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

After determining the correct length, shell shape, and flex, the skier's preferences for brand, style, and cost narrow the boot selection to one or two models. The selected pair becomes the starting point for customization.

COLLISION DECISIONS

The foot collides with the shell when the boot is too tight. In boots that are too big, the foot slides, slamming into the shell. The body protects itself by building up the collision area with calcium, resulting in a bone spur.

"I mark the hard parts of the foot where clearly there is going to be collision," says Dewey. The inside and outside of the ankle, the top of the instep, the bone on the outside of the foot, the "sixth toe," big toe, and pinky toe are common spots for collisions. He then stretches the shell—called "punching the boot"—to create space.

To punch the boot, Dewey slowly heats the shell to 350 degrees using heat guns. A pneumatic ram, inserted into the shell, pushes a form into the target area, stretching the plastic. Dewey has two dozen custom cherry wood and aluminum forms, each designed to solve a specific problem.

"Most guys are impatient. They just want to just get it done," Dewey says. "Heating too quickly can melt or burn the boot," he notes.

FOOT BED FUNDAMENTALS

While the pneumatic ram stretches the shell, Dewey customizes the foot bed. "Any foot bed is better than the stock foot bed," Dewey says. The stock foot bed does not support the foot properly and is discarded.

Ideally, the customer will have a custom foot bed made. Custom foot beds last up to 10 years and Dewey encourages skiers to get them. "I have athletes who like their foot beds so much the move them around to their other shoes," Dewey notes. "Whether it's a cut-to-fit one or a custom one, the most important thing is the technician knows how to work with it."

BODY ALIGNMENT

After shaping the shell, Dewey checks the knee and ankle alignment. Legs can be bowed, skewed, or angled in. Past injuries sometimes leave one leg longer than the other. Frequently he discovers problems skiers did not know they had. "We're measuring in millimeters. They usually haven't been through something this precise before," he explains.

The skiers take their skiing stance in the alignment tool while wearing their new boots. Dewey

checks alignment by placing a gauge on the knee. A rod runs from the knee to the toe, showing the angle. He places shims under the boot to correct the angle, or cant, of the leg.

Dewey uses the angle measured to change the sole of the boot, correcting the skier's cant. He removes a section of the sole, stacking washers on the inside or outside of the gap to create the correct angle. He fills the gap with epoxy and then routes the binding tabs to level, making sure to keep them within DIN standards.

The entire process typically takes two-and-a-half hours. Satisfied customers sign the walls at Race Stock and return with each new set of boots. Once you realize what an expert fitter can do, taking your boots off will no longer be the best part of your ski day. □

Bob LoCicero typically takes two-and-a-half hours. Satisfied customers sign the walls at Race Stock and return with each new set of boots. Once you realize what an expert fitter can do, taking your boots off will no longer be the best part of your ski day. □

Bob LoCicero is a skiing, mountain biking and hiking enthusiast. He lives and works in Huntington, VT. He can be reached at Bob@motorcycle-vermont.com.

MORE INFO:

Vermont skiers are fortunate to have qualified boot fitters in locations around the state. The America's Best Boot Fitters web site lists certified shops and has boot reviews and fit tips. To become certified, a shop must have a supervising boot fitter with at least 10 years experience and at least two staff members who have achieved Masters Certification from Masterfit University, the ski and snowboard industry-run training center for boot fitting—America's Best Boot Fitters, bootfitters.com/oldsite/index.html.

NOTEWORTHY VERMONT BOOT FITTERS

Alpine Options, Warren

802-583-1763, 888-888-9131, alpineoptions.com

Green Mountain Orthotic Lab at First Run Ski Shop, Stratton Mountain Village

802-875-1122, gmolfab.com

Inner Bootworks, Stowe

802-253-6929, innerbootworks.com

Northern Ski Works, Killington Road, Killington

802-422-9675, northernski.com

Northern Ski Works, Main St., Ludlow

802-228-3344, northernski.com

Peak Performance Skip Shop, Killington

On the Ski Magazine Top 50 list of ski shops for the last 9 years. 802-422-9447, peakskipshop.com

Race Stock Sports, Waterbury

802-578-3585, racestocksports.com

The Boot Pro, Ludlow

802-228-2776, bootfitters.com/oldsite/shops/thebootpro.html



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MUSCLES NOT MOTORS GEAR GUIDE

BY
RYAN JAMES LECLERC



Whether you're a snowboarder or snowshoer, mountain hiker or mountain biker, Nordic skier or Nordic walker, you need gear. Each month, I review, right here, three items that I personally feel are especially cool. Here are my picks for this month.



SIERRA DESIGNS GNAR JACKET FOR MEN AND WOMEN

If you don't own a lightweight down jacket, or have never borrowed one indefinitely from a dear friend, you're missing out on what many people refer to as their favorite piece of gear. To give you an idea of just how special they are, I left one at an airport bar once and was so distraught I couldn't sleep for a week. The Sierra Designs Gnar jacket is highly compressible, super versatile, and unbelievably lightweight and can be worn under a shell as the perfect insulating layer for ultra cold days, or as a super stylish outer layer on cool to pretty darn cold days. When compressed, it takes up very little space inside your pack but makes all the difference in the world when pulled out and zipped on. The Gnar jacket is built with 800-fill goose down and a 100-percent nylon rip-stop shell that is treated with a DWR (Durable Water Resistant) finish. It features a single zippered chest pocket for your camera, season pass, or MP3 player, and two larger pockets for your hands, a couple of grapefruits, or the keys to your soul. To keep the cool air from creeping in, it also features elastic cuffs with thumb holes and an adjustable hem. \$199. www.sierradesigns.com.



BRUNTON ADC PRO ATMOSPHERIC DATA CENTER

Forget those hacks on the radio and become your own weatherman or weatherwoman with the Brunton ADC Pro. With this slick 2.4-ounce weather station in your hand, you can observe an array of current weather conditions, including temperature, wind speed, barometric pressure, and humidity, as well as track up-to-the-minute trends that affect the skies in your area. Dazzle your friends with your meteorological skills by correctly predicting that the giant Nor'Easter the weather guys are all excited about will turn out to be nothing more than a Nor'Incher. The wind speed feature on the waterproof ADC Pro can also be used to determine water speed, so you can once again dazzle your friends the next time you're sailing by correctly informing them how fast you're going. Other cool features include a ski run counter, wind speed and wind chill alarms, and an altitude alarm. \$205. www.brunton.com.



ROSSIGNOL BC 125 BACKCOUNTRY SKIS

After work during the winter, when we want some fresh air and exercise, but don't feel like travelling too far, we often grab our headlamps and head to the secret "back bowls" to go skiing. The name is a joke of course—the "back bowls" are nothing more than a few open fields in back of a certain place with decent pitch that allow for about six or seven good turns before flattening out—but for post work, in-town skiing, they're not too shabby, and after 10 or 15 laps, you've burned some serious calories. This year, we're thrilled to take the all

new Rossignol BC 125s to the back bowls because they are the perfect skis for sessioning a good hillside until all the powder is tracked out. The BC 125s have a full metal edge, a wide profile (125-90-115mm), and a single camber with a nice round flex so they perform great pointed downhill in deep snow, but unlike standard tele skis, they have a Posi-Track waxless base which allows you to get to the top without climbing skins. For kicking around the backcountry with a primary focus of making sweet turns down relatively short descents, these skis are ideal. And I'm terribly sorry, but I can't tell you where to find the secret back bowls. \$400. www.rossignol.com.

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VT Nordic Skating List

Spreading the Gospel of Natural Ice

BY PHYL NEWBECK

Skating from Basin Harbor by Palisades cliffs on
Lake Champlain. Photo by Ed Linton.

As the days get colder and the calendar turns to December and then January, the VT Nordic Skating listserv begins to heat up. There's Jan, asking if anyone wants to hike up to Sterling Pond, where he had a memorable skate one November. Others chime in with reports of skateable or not-so-skateable ice in their necks of the woods. Usually, the first to provide a report of solid ice on a larger surface is Chris, up at Lake Carmi.

The VT Nordic Skating listserv is the brainchild of Jan DeVries, a tall, slender native of Friesland, Holland, who now resides in Underhill. The VT Nordic Skating listserv is a way for practitioners of that very ephemeral sport to keep each other apprised of good skating conditions in Vermont and beyond (by way of full disclosure I should note that I collaborated with Jan on the founding of the listserv).

Nordic skating, sometimes referred to as "wild skating" by Jamie Hess, the man who almost singlehandedly introduced the state to the sport, uses Nordic ski boots with detachable skate blades on natural ice surfaces. Hess opened his store, Nordic Skater, in his basement in 1999, moving to a storefront in Norwich five years later. For years, Hess has sent out a Friday night e-mail to his contact list, letting skaters know where the ice is good. While that missive is helpful, some felt that more immediate knowledge would be more beneficial and thus, the VT Nordic Skating listserv was born.

Established in January of 2008, word of the list quickly spread in the tight-knit community where there is definitely safety in numbers. There are currently over 160 members, with several residing outside the state. As Vince Rossano of landlocked Montpelier notes, "Timely information is absolutely critical to our sport and the list has made the difference between hitting the ice just right and taking long drives to disappointment."

Skaters use the list to provide ice reports and post planned trips in the hope of attracting additional skaters. In contrast to backcountry skiers who may zealously guard a powder stash, there is nothing to be lost and plenty to be gained by telling others where the ice is good. Several skaters have taken a leap of faith, opening up their homes to others if they have direct access to bodies of water. One winter, I crashed the homes of two complete strangers, neither of whom turned out to be serial killers.

Although many Nordic skaters have their local ponds, the real excitement comes from the bigger bodies of water, so when Chris reports that Lake Carmi is frozen, skaters jump in their cars and head up to Franklin for a shot at the black ice. A bigger thrill comes when the folks living in Milton and South Hero start reporting good conditions. The Van Everest Fish and Wildlife Access and the Sand Bar are favored starting locations for those looking to explore the Inland Sea. With any luck, when snow starts to cover the surface north of the Sand

"There was black ice, sun, little wind ... I was going full speed, just making sure my skates touched the ice soundlessly."

—Jan DeVries, co-founder of the VT Nordic Skating List.



Jan DeVries, skating on Sterling Pond near Spruce Peak in Stowe/Jeffersonville.
Photo by Ruud Vekemans.

MORE INFO

To join the list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VTNordicSkating>

To check out equipment, go to <http://www.nordicskater.com>

Bar, we'll hear from John that the ice between Charlotte and Essex, NY, has frozen over. In 2009-10, that never happened.

Last winter several list members put together an introductory day off the Sand Bar, complete with demo equipment provided by Hess. At least two dozen skaters, both novice and veteran, took to the ice that day, and several converts were born. Recognizing that skating on natural ice is inherently dangerous, another list member set up an opportunity for "plurörövning"—a Swedish word for self-rescue. Local rescue crews were on hand as skaters deliberately jumped into a man-made hole in the ice to practice self-extrication while video cameras recorded their efforts. More than a few of us have fallen through unintentionally; in fact a memorable post to the listserv was titled "Swimming in Wrightsville Reservoir." For this reason, virtually all of us carry poles (also useful when crossing pressure ridges or fighting against the wind), ice claws (which have sharp points to help pull a skater out of the water), and a sealed bag with a change of clothes in our backpacks. Nordic skating is not a minimalist sport.

The thrill of Nordic skating lies in its unpredictability. Some winters the Almost Great Lake freezes beautifully, while in other years an early snow or a freeze/thaw cycle makes for an uneven surface. In early 2010, members of the listserv read glowing reports of lengthy trips (the high for last season was 40 miles, but several skaters managed multiple trips in the 25-mile range) on the Inland Sea, with more than a few making the trek from Milton to North Hero for lunch at Hero's Welcome. Skaters simply remove their blades to walk across Route 2 in their boots for lunch, before the return trip. On one such outing, a stiff south wind opened up a pressure ridge, revealing open water, making the return trip a bit more exciting.

The main page of the Nordic Skating site has become more than an archive of old posts. There are files with instructions on how to avoid bad ice and photos from some of the better outings. Some skaters include GPS maps with their photos to show their exact routes. The elder statesmen of the group have provided invaluable information about safety equipment and ice arcana such as gas holes; information which is not readily available outside Scandinavia. A Google map shows locations for skating throughout the northeast with descriptions of each body of water. The list isn't always dry and factual; one poster from Maine offers up ice-themed poetry. The first videos of the 2010-11 season came with the warning, "These videos show tantalizing conditions; viewer discretion advised."

The 75-year-old DeVries, accustomed

to seeing hundreds of skaters on the ice in Europe, often wonders why more people don't skate outdoors. A veteran of several skating marathons, including the famous Elfstedentocht or Eleven Cities Tour in Holland, he recognizes the perils of natural ice, particularly after a recent jarring fall, but believes people are missing out by skating in circles in temperature-controlled indoor rinks, rather than venturing outdoors.

"One day on Lake Champlain," he says, "there was black ice, sun, little wind, just the amphitheatre formed by the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains, and I was going full speed, just making sure my skates touched the ice soundlessly. Who would have thought that after more than sixty years of skating on Dutch canals and lakes, the best was still to come?"

DeVries's enthusiasm is contagious. As Rossano notes, "The list is helping us create a sub-culture of Nordic skating nuts who feel good about the sport and, mostly, about each other. They want to help make it a better experience for all of us. And that's great!" ☞

Phyl Newbeck lives in Jericho with her partner Bryan and two cats. She has had several memorable outings on Lake Champlain, thanks to the VT Nordic Skating listserv. Phyl is a skier, skater, cyclist, kayaker, and lover of virtually any sport which does not involve motors. She is the author of Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers: Interracial Marriage Bans and the Case of Richard and Mildred Loving.



While Vermont's alpine and Nordic ski areas continue to offer world-class skiing experiences, skiers of all abilities are utilizing Vermont's tremendous variety of backcountry trails and ski terrain like never before. Many skiers are content to ski locally, if not right out the back door, or explore terrain on state or national forest lands. Ski resorts such as Bolton Valley and Trapp Family Lodge are catering to an increasing demand for downhill-oriented backcountry skiing by hosting regular events and opening new terrain. Improvements in backcountry ski gear make the challenge of backcountry skiing more approachable than ever.

Around the state, new backcountry skiing events are cropping up each year. There are now backcountry-oriented races, organized ski tours, and a variety

of clinics filling the winter calendar. Whether you are looking to explore backcountry skiing for the first time or race along the spine of the Green Mountains, you are sure to find an event to meet your desires.

Here are five backcountry adventures that span a broad range of terrain. For a complete list of events, please check the *Vermont Sports* online calendar (www.vtsports.com) or see pages 18-21 of this issue.

GET OUT AND BACKCOUNTRY FESTIVAL

Sunday, Jan. 23, Bolton Valley Nordic Center
www.catamounttrail.org

Come out and support the Catamount Trail Association, keepers of North America's longest backcountry ski trail, and take your interest in backcountry skiing to the next level. Lessons and tours led by expert instructors will be offered throughout the day on Bolton's beautiful and varied backcountry terrain. Skiers of all abilities are encouraged to come prepared with their own skiing equipment, but demos of the latest skis and boots will be available. The day will wrap up with an après-ski gathering and video review session. Pack your own lunch or buy lunch at the Bolton Valley Deli or cafeteria. Pre-registration by January 20 is required and limited to 65 people.

GIRLS MOVE MOUNTAINS, INTRO TO BACKCOUNTRY SKIING FOR WOMEN

Feb. 5-6, 2011, Bolton Valley Nordic Center
www.girlsmovemountains.com

For those women eager to explore the world of backcountry skiing, this is your event. You will become familiar with backcountry skiing basics, along with important skills for being safe and comfortable when exploring the mountains in winter, while skiing Bolton's variety of groomed and backcountry terrain. The two-day workshop features expert instruction, a 1:5 instructor to participant ratio, and a fun group

atmosphere. The program is designed for beginner to intermediate skiers. No backcountry experience is necessary. All proceeds from the event will benefit Girls Move Mountains, a Montpelier-based organization that nurtures girls' innate capacity for confidence, courage, and leadership through adventure-based experiential education.

MOUNTAIN HARDWEAR SKI MOUNTAINEERING RACE

Sunday, Feb. 6, 2011, Mad River Glen/Sugarbush Ski Areas

www.ussma.org/races

Now in its fifth year, the Mountain Hardware Ski Mountaineering Race returns to Vermont's Mad River Valley to challenge backcountry skiers of all abilities on a beautiful course connecting the legendary Mad River Glen and Sugarbush ski areas. The event is part of the U.S. Ski Mountaineering Association Race Series, which culminates with a championship race out west in late winter. While most skiers "race" this strikingly beautiful course (top female and male skiers finish in under two-and-a-half hours), many skiers are perfectly content to simply enjoy a challenging tour. The course starts with a 2,000-foot skin from the base of Mad River Glen, before traversing the Long Trail south to the summit ridge of Mount Ellen (Sugarbush North). Skiers then descend via Sugarbush's Lower FIS run to the base of Slidebrook Basin, before climbing out of Slidebrook to the North Lynx area at Sugarbush South. A final descent leads to the finish at the base area of Sugarbush. Skiers gather at a post-race party in the afternoon, where event organizers host a big raffle and award prizes to the fastest finishers in several categories.

CAMEL'S HUMP CHALLENGE

Sunday, Feb. 13, 2011, Huntington
www.camelshumpchallenge.com

The Camel's Hump Challenge is a backcountry ski tra-



Peter Wadsworth

verse and circumnavigation of Camel's Hump (4,083 feet) conceived by the late Dr. Warren Beeken, an avid Camel's Hump skier. Skiers participate by raising at least \$125 in pledges, which the CHC organizers donate to the Vermont Alzheimer's Association. The event is not a race, but rather a demanding and well-organized 25K backcountry ski tour through one of Vermont's most beautiful mountain environments, including hardwoods, birch glades, conifer stands, boulder gardens, scenic windows, and more. After climbing away from the start of the tour in Huntington, the route main-

tains a relatively steady course between 2,500 and 3,500 feet, and a few downhill sections can be quite challenging if the snow conditions are firm. Skiers should be competent backcountry skiers and be prepared to spend the good part of day in the remote Camel's Hump backcountry. The route is swept and monitored by volunteer ski patrollers, and finishing skiers will be rewarded with hot food and drinks and a warm fire.

BOLTON TO THE BARNS

Saturday, March 5, Bolton Ski Area to Richmond Monitor Barns
www.vycc.org

After a sunny and successful first year event, the Bolton to the Barns ski tour will be back again this March, providing backcountry skiers with a unique opportunity to explore the Bolton's region's abundant backcountry terrain with friends and fellow skiers. The event features two options for the tour: a moderate, rolling 11-mile route and a more strenuous 17-mile route. The tours start at Bolton Valley Nordic Center and finish at the VYCC Monitor Barns in Richmond. The event is a fundraiser for the VYCC, and a fun apres-ski gathering features warm food, libations, bonfire, and more.

Brian Mohr and his wife, Emily Johnson, of Moretown, VT, photograph for a wide variety of publications, manufacturers, and organizations throughout the outdoor industry. They publish AdventureSkier.com, and organize their own slideshow series that features human-powered adventure. You can learn more about them at EmberPhoto.com.



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VS: You'll be snowshoeing in the Tubbs Romp to Stomp Out Breast Cancer this month. How many years have you done this?

AG: This will be my eighth, all in Vermont.

VS: What was the inspiration for participating?

AG: I believe January 2003 was the first year there was a Romp in Vermont. I heard about it on the radio, but that year I already had plans for that weekend. The next summer, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. That fall, I heard about the Romp again, and I called up my sister who lives in Maryland. I said, "This sounds like a really fun thing, why don't you guys come up and we'll do it together?" That was when the Romp was much smaller. And the team was pretty small, so just the four of us—she and her husband and my then-boyfriend and I—did it, and we tried to raise some money, but only raised about \$1,500. The next year, my mom was a lot sicker, and we got a lot of friends together who came and joined us in support of my mom. My mom and dad joined us in 2005. But sadly, my mom passed away in June 2005. Since then, it's kind of the same core group of people who get together. We've lost a few and added a few. Consistently I would say for the past four years, we have had about 20 team members, and lately we've been raising around \$15,000.

VS: How are you so successful at fundraising?

AG: My mom was very loved by a lot of people, and so in one respect, because she died, a lot of people that knew her and loved her are very willing to donate to this cause. I just got a check in the mail from my grandmother and she said, "Here's my little piece of remembering your mom." With 20 people all asking

READER ATHLETE



ALYSON RUBY GRZYP

Age: 36

Residence: Sunderland

Family: Husband, Steve Grzyb

Occupation: Preschool teacher

Primary sport: Snowshoeing

for money, you tend to get a pretty big response. We're pretty spread out, too. I coordinate the team here from Vermont, but a majority of people come from different states. My dad is in Connecticut, my sister and her husband live in Maryland, and they bring friends. I have cousins from Massachusetts and the Chicago area, so we're pulling from a wide range of people. We also have a few deep pockets to ask from. There have been a number of people over the years who have consistently given us \$500 donations or even \$1,000 donations. We have good givers. Also, I think because we've been doing it so many years, some people expect it, so they plan on it.

VS: How do your friends in warmer climates prepare for a long snowshoe?

AG: Snowshoeing on a relatively flat and groomed trail (which is what you find at the Romp) is not too difficult. Just walking is enough to prepare you. If we were doing some back-country trailblazing they might need to do more cardiovascular training, but for a simple walk they are okay. The thing that usually hinders them the most is the cold weather, but they have learned to dress in many layers!

VS: What was it about your mom that endeared her to so many people?

AG: My mom was just one of those people that everyone loves. She was cute and funny. She was a good listener. She liked to have fun. She had a kind and generous heart.

VS: How does it feel to contribute that much to breast cancer research?

AG: It's pretty exciting. The first couple of years, when we jumped from raising \$1,500 to the next year was \$10,000 ... We thought, "Wow this is a lot of money." When I tell people about it they're blown away.

VS: What brought you to Vermont?

AG: That's a long story. My now-husband brought me to Vermont. We are both from Trumbull, CT. We went to high school together. He moved up here after high school, and I had some other friends who moved to Vermont as well. I would say seven years later one of our mutual friends moved back to Connecticut, and it was through him that we saw each other again and then started dating and did the long distance thing for a couple years. We decided one of us should move, and I was ready for a change in scenery.

I've been really happy ever since. I love it.

VS: How did you get interested in teaching?

AG: When I was in college, I was studying liberal arts with a focus on psychology, but didn't really know what I wanted to do. I had been babysitting since I was 12 years old. When I graduated, I got a nanny job for the summer and I was looking for anything that might interest me. Working with kids was something I thought I wanted to do. A position opened at a preschool in Branford, CT. It was sort of a part-time assistant teacher position to start, but it quickly grew into full-time, lead teacher position. I went back to school and started working toward a Master's in early childhood ed. And I got my teacher's license in Vermont.

VS: What do you enjoy about it?

AG: I love the innocence and wonder. They're learning so much, and so fast, that you can actually watch that happen. I think it's so fascinating to be a part of that. And also to be unconditionally loved by them and adored. They are awesome. Then they go off to elementary school and pick up bad habits.

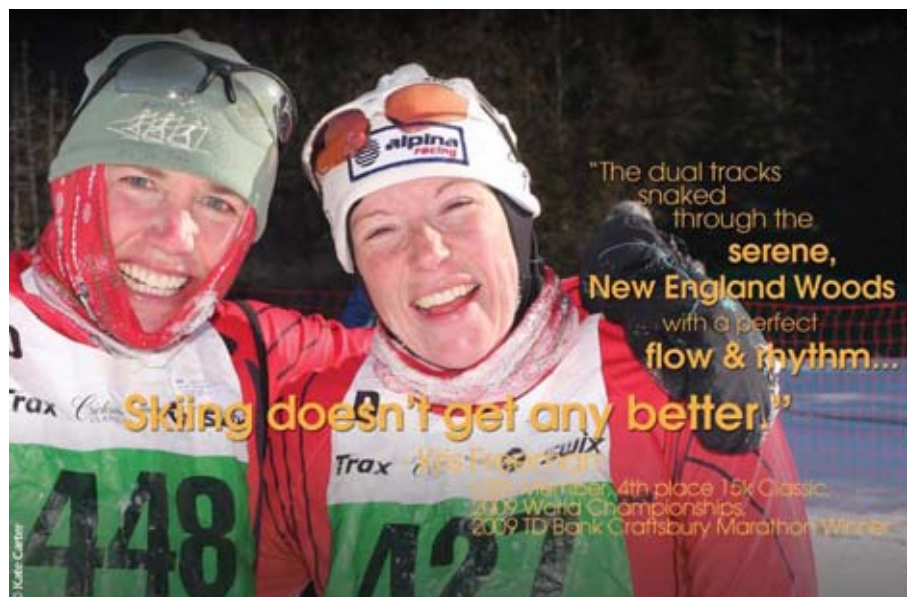
VS: What is your favorite place to hike?

AG: There's a place up in Brandon called Rattlesnake Cliff and the Falls of Lana. I've only been there a couple times, but it's awesome. I do a lot of hiking around this area, at Mount Equinox, Bromley, Lye Brook Falls. I'm a member of the Green Mountain Club Manchester section, so I do some trail work with them and group hikes.

VS: You enjoy reading—what's a good book you've read lately?

AG: I liked *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

—Sky Barsch Gleiner



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VS: Why do you compete in the TDBank Craftsbury Marathon?

PB: I guess it's a personal challenge. This will be my 10th one this year; I've done it every year since 2002. I guess I did it on a lark the first year. Our first daughter had just been born, or maybe she was about a year old, and I just thought I would do it. It took me five and-a-half hours. My goal was to be faster than the previous year, and I've done that each year.

VS: What's your training like?

PB: I swim a lot and rollerski as much as I can. We have a great bike path in Burlington, so usually I get a couple days on the rollerskis each week, a couple days swimming, and a couple days weight training at the Y, after a few friends recommended weight training.

VS: Do you like the course better as a clover leaf, or did you prefer to the end-to-end route?

PB: I guess I like the conditions on the cloverleaf, but I like the scenery of the end-to-end route. I certainly understand why they went to a cloverleaf. But when it was point to point, it went by the back yard of our Greensboro house. The kids would camp out and cheer there.

VS: The tour has been separated and has its own date now. How do you feel about that?

PB: I think it's a nice compromise. The tour is still point to point. My daughter Quincy turned 7 the day before the 25K

READER ATHLETE



**PAUL
BIERMAN**

Age: 49

Residence: Burlington

Family: Wife, Christine Massey; daughters Marika, 11, Quincy, 7

Occupation: Geology Professor at UVM

Primary sport: Nordic Skiing

last year, and both kids did it. It was her first time doing something that long.

VS: What is the most grueling portion of the race?

PB: The climb up to the Common. When you don't have that much wax left and don't have much left in your legs, you've got that climb. But overall, it's my favorite race; it's incredibly well run. It's fun to ski what is essentially a home course. We probably ski 30 or 40 times a year at the center and another 30 or 40 times a year on the Highland Lodge trails and surrounding trails.

VS: You've been involved in many research projects through your work at UVM. What is the farthest you've traveled for a project?

PB: Last summer I was in southern Namibia, Africa, for 10 days. Another time I went to Australia to meet with some colleagues and write a research proposal,

and I skied there for a couple days. I've done the ski marathon down there—the Kangaroo Hopet—it's a 42-kilometer skate. It's great fun—it's completely off-season and at about a mile-high elevation. It's about the same size as Craftsbury, about 1,000 people, and it's almost all above treeline skiing. When the weather is great, it's fantastic. When it's awful, it's ... incredible. One year there was a storm and you couldn't see 30 feet in front of you, and at the end of the race, a thunderstorm came through. They cut it to 28 kilometers.

VS: What has been your favorite research project?

PB: Greenland. Greenland's an amazing place. We were looking at the times in the past when the ice sheet has either gotten much smaller or disappeared. It involved a lot of hiking and a lot of helicopter time. That's probably been the most way

out place I've been for fieldwork. We did bring a set of skis and skied on an ice sheet, at midnight, under the midnight sun, just for fun.

VS: Have you seen any significant threats to our ability to ski in Vermont in the near future?

PB: We have. I had a Master's student last year, who studied precipitation and runoff records for the Winooski River Basin. There has been a 15 percent increase in the last 75 years in runoff, and slight increase in temperature. It's definitely getting wetter, and it's not quite as cold as it was. If it's going to get wetter, there may be more snow, but there maybe more rain on snow.

VS: What do you enjoy doing with your family, beside skiing?

PB: We like hiking and other kinds of exercise. We also like putting old houses back together. Our house in Greensboro is 150 years old, and we also have an old Victorian in Burlington.

VS: You're taking a sabbatical next semester. What do you plan to do?

PB: Finish up a textbook I've been working on, Key Concepts in Geomorphology, and skiing a lot! I hope to do four or five marathons as well as some shorter races, and really work on my technique since we'll be at the Craftsbury Center at least several times a week with the kids, who will be training with Pepa Miloucheva and the BKL group.

—Sky Barsch Gleiner

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To have an event listed in our events calendar, your event must be posted on our website at www.vtsports.com, and you must register on the site. From the home page, click on "Events" in the navigation bar and then on the event page, click the red "Add a New Event" button on the right of the page. Follow the instructions from there and be sure to select "I wish to be an event poster." Your registration should be approved within 12 hours, usually sooner.

ADVENTURE RACING

FEBRUARY

- 26 MVP Health Care Frigid Infliction Winter Adventure Race, Bolton Valley Resort, Bolton, VT, Tim Curtin, 802-578-2972, tim@gmara.org, www.gmara.org

BIATHLON

ONGOING

Thursdays, Biathlon Winter Race Series (Jan. 6 thru Feb. 17), 4:30PM, freestyle, under lights, beginners welcome, Ethan Allen Biathlon Range, Jericho Center, VT, John Madigan, jpmad2003@yahoo.com

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

JANUARY

- 1 Mount Hor Hop, Lake Willoughby State Park, Westmore, VT, Mike Kiser, kiser52@comcast.net
- 8 Tour de Trapp (1st Annual) 40K, Trapp Family Lodge Cross-Country Center, Stowe, VT, 802-253-8511, info@trappfamily.com, www.trappfamily.com
- 8 Catamount Trail Association Women's Nordic Ski Expo & Clinics, Trapp Family Lodge Cross-Country Center, Stowe, VT, Joanne Hanowski, jhanowski@pshift.com, www.catamounttrail.org

- 8 Winter Trails Day, Smugglers' Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Adventure Center, Smugglers' Notch Resort, Jeffersonville, VT, Zeke Zucker, 802-644-1173, zzucker@smuggs.com, www.smuggs.com
- 9 Vermont Ski Museum Antique Classic, 2.5-mile race on antique gear, Trapp Family Lodge Cross-Country Center, Stowe, VT, 802-253-8511, info@trappfamily.com, www.trappfamily.com
- 15 Maple Onion Ski Weekend at Morse Farm, Sprint Races on 1.5K loop, Morse Farm Cross-Country Center, Montpelier, VT, Carrie Stahler, 802-229-9409, thefolks@onionriver.com, www.onionriver.com
- 16 Maple Onion Ski Weekend at Morse Farm, 15K Freestyle Race, Morse Farm Cross-Country Center, Montpelier, VT, Carrie Stahler, 802-229-9409, thefolks@onionriver.com, www.onionriver.com
- 16 Tour de Stowe, Trapp Family Lodge Cross-Country Center to downtown Stowe, VT, 802-253-8511, info@trappfamily.com, www.trappfamily.com
- 23 Race to Slayton Pasture Cabin, Stowe, VT, Trapp Family Lodge Cross-Country Center, Stowe, VT, 802-253-8511, info@trappfamily.com, www.trappfamily.com
- 23 Get Out and Backcountry Festival with the Catamount Trail Assoc., Bolton Valley Nordic Center, Bolton, VT, Jim Fredericks, 802-864-5794, jfredericks@catamounttrail.org, www.catamounttrail.org
- 26 Toko Wax Clinic with Dave Boucher, Onion River Sports, Montpelier, VT, Carrie Stahler, 802-229-9409, thefolks@onionriver.com, www.onionriver.com

- 29 30th Annual TD Bank Craftsbury Marathon 50K/25K and 25K Tour, Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Craftsbury, VT, www.craftsbury.com
- 30 NENSA Women's Day, Bolton Valley Nordic Center, Bolton, VT, Abby Weissman, abby@nensa.net, www.nensa.net

FEBRUARY

- 4-5 UVM Winter Carnival, Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe, VT, info@trappfamily.com
- 5-6 Girls Move Mountains Introduction to Backcountry Skiing for Women, Bolton Valley Resort, Bolton, VT, Meghan Giroux, 802-229-2976, info@girlsmovemountains.org, www.girlsmovemountains.org
- 10 Stowe Derby RECON (run the Stowe Derby course), 1:30PM, Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe, VT, Pascale Savard, 802-253-9216, stowederby@teammssc.org, www.stowederby.com
- 13 Camel's Hump Challenge, 25K backcountry ski, Huntington, VT, Jared Poor, 802-985-2913, camels_humpchallenge@comcast.net, www.camels_humpchallenge.com
- 27 Stowe Derby, 16K from the summit of Mount Mansfield to the town of Stowe, classic, freestyle, and Derbymeister divisions, Pascale Savard, 802-253-7704 ext. 22 or 802-253-9216, stowederby@teammssc.org, www.stowederby.com



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MARCH

- 5 Bolton to the Barns backcountry ski tours, Bolton Valley, VT, Breck Knauft, 802-434-3969, breck.knauft@vycc.org, www.vycc.org
- 9-12 NCAA Ski Championships, cross-country ski races are Thursday and Saturday at Trapp Family Lodge, downhill races are Wednesday and Friday at Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe, VT, info@trappfamily.com
- 12-13 CTA Pemi Overnight Traverse for advanced skiers, Bretton Woods, NH, Pete Lane, 774-249-9649, pete.lane@comcast.net, www.catamounttrail.org
- 13 4th Annual Catamount Trail 15K Backcountry Race and Tour, Trapp Family Lodge to Bolton Valley Resort, VT, Jim Fredericks, 802-864-5794, jfredericks@catamounttrail.org, www.catamounttrail.org

ONGOING

Saturdays (most Saturdays through March), Catamount Trail Association organized ski tours on various parts of the Catamount Trail, www.catamounttrail.org for specific details

Sundays (through March 13), 10:30AM-1PM, Nordic Kids, for kids ages 6-12, Bolton Valley, VT, Liz Hollenbach, 802-434-6876, nordiccenter@boltonvalley.com, www.boltonvalley.com

FIRST AID/FIRST RESPONDER

JANUARY

8-16 Wilderness First Responder with Aerie Backcountry Medicine, SCA Center for Conservation Service, Charlestown, NH, Lew Shelley, lshelley@thesca.org, www.thesca.org

MISCELLANEOUS

JANUARY

- 9 Lake Morey WinterFest, Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee, VT, Deb Williams, 802-333-3405, Deb_williams@alohafoundation.org, www.alohafoundation.org
- 28-29 Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour, 7PM, UVM Davis Center, Burlington, VT, Will Skolochenko, 802-658-3313, wills@skirack.com, www.skirack.com
- 29 Vermont Adaptive Ski-A-Thon, Bolton Valley Resort, Bolton, VT, info@boltonvalley.com, www.boltonvalley.com

ONGOING

Monday through Friday, 2:45-5PM, Team Vermont Weightlifting (Olympic Lifts), Essex Middle School, Essex, VT, Chris Polakowski, 802-879-7252 (eves.), 802-879-7173 (days)

Wednesdays, 6-9PM, Dodge Ball League, Racquet's Edge 2, Essex Jct., VT, Jen, 802-879-7736 ext. 134

Thursdays, Greater Burlington Fencing Club & Open Fencing, Youth & Adults, 6:30-9PM, Burlington, VT, Ann Miller, 802-865-1763 or Dale Rodgers, 802-878-2902

Sundays, 10AM-2PM, The Shelburne Athletic Fencing Club, Instruction and Open Fencing, Shelburne Athletic Club, 802-985-2229 or Dale Rodgers, 802-878-2902

Sundays, 4:30-6PM, Montpelier Unicycle Club indoor riding, Montpelier Rec Dept. Gym, Montpelier, VT, Bill Merrylees, 802-223-4951, bmerrylees@u32.org, www.vtunicycle.com/whenwhere.html

PILATES

ONGOING

Mondays & Thursdays, 6-7PM, Pilates Group Mat Classes, Timberlane Physical Therapy North, Winooski, VT, Nancy, 802-864-3785

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30AM, Pilates Group Mat Classes, Timberlane Physical Therapy, So. Burlington, VT, Nancy, 802-864-3785

RUNNING

JANUARY

- 1 First Run Burlington 5K & Kids' Half-Mile Fun Run, Memorial Auditorium, Burlington, VT, Joe Connelly, 802-863-8412, joe@runvermont.org, www.runvermont.org
- 15 Winter Wild Uphill Series #1 (run, snowshoe, ski uphill, then come back down), Whaleback Mountain, Enfield, NH, Chad Denning, 603-748-1070, recreation@nl-nh.com, www.winterwild.com
- 19 Team in Training Information Meeting, Fleet Feet, Essex Junction, VT, Gail Deuso, 802-233-0014, gail.deuso@lls.org
- 22 Team in Training Information Meeting, Fletcher Memorial Library, Ludlow, VT, Gail Deuso, 802-233-0014, gail.deuso@lls.org
- 25 Team in Training Information Meeting, Courtyard Marriott, Burlington, VT, Gail Deuso, 802-233-0014, gail.deuso@lls.org

FEBRUARY

- 5 Winter Wild Uphill Series #2 (run, snowshoe, ski uphill, then come back down), Ragged Mountain, Danbury, NH, Chad Denning, 603-748-1070, recreation@nl-nh.com, www.winterwild.com
- 19 Winter Wild Uphill Series #3 (run, snowshoe, ski uphill, then come back down), Pats Peak, Henniker, NH, Chad Denning, 603-748-1070, recreation@nl-nh.com, www.winterwild.com

ONGOING

Tuesdays, 5PM, On Track Striders Track Workouts/Group Runs, Union Station, Burlington, VT, Kim Loeffler, 802-865-2226

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5-6PM, Running Unlimited, for runners preparing to race any distance, First in Fitness, Berlin, VT, Linda Freeman, 802-233-6161, lfreeman@firstinfitness.com, www.firstinfitness.com

Tuesdays, 5:15PM, Northern Vermont Ridge Runners Track Practices for runners of all abilities, People's Academy, Route 15A, Morrisville, VT

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 Thursdays, 5:30PM, Skirack Trail Runs at Red Rocks Park, Burlington, VT, Will Skolochenko, 802-658-3313
 Sunday Morning Training Runs, Small City Road Runners Club, 1-4 miles on a loop course, Vergennes City Park, Vergennes, VT, Ramey Armell, 802-377-9906, ramey2001@yahoo.com
 Sundays, Team in Training group runs, Burlington area, for meeting locations contact Jan Leja, www.runwithjan.com
 Sundays, 8AM, Vermont City Marathon/Green Mountain Athletic Association Social Runs, Twin Oaks, Farrell St., So. Burlington, VT, Mike Desanto, 802-893-0547, mike.desanto@gmail.com
 Sundays, BKVR Training Runs, Southwestern Vermont, Jim Sullivan, 802-375-2813, www.bkvr.org

SKI, SKATE, SNOWBOARD SWAPS

JANUARY

8-9 Skirack's Annual Ski & Snowboard Swap, drop-off Jan. 3-7, sale Jan. 8-9, Burlington, VT, Will Skolochenko, 802-658-3313, wills@skirack.com, www.skirack.com

SNOWBOARDING

JANUARY

15 K-Town Showdown #2 (Rail Jam), Killington, VT, thobbs@killington.com, www.killington.com

20-23 Dew Tour multi-sport event, featuring snowboard and freeskiing, superpipe and slopestyle, Killington, VT, thobbs@killington.com
 29-30 Captain Ahab's 24/12 Endurance Challenge, Whaleback Mountain, Enfield, NH, Peter Krass, peter@whaleback.com
 30 USASA Slopestyle, Bolton Valley Resort, Bolton, VT, info@boltonvalley.com, www.boltonvalley.com

FEBRUARY

19 K-Town Showdown #3 (Slopestyle), Killington, VT, thobbs@killington.com, www.killington.com

SNOWSHOEING

JANUARY

29 Tubbs Romp to Stomp Out Breast Cancer Snowshoe Series, Stratton, VT, romptostomp@tubbssnowshoes.com

FEBRUARY

6 10th Annual Northern Vermont Snowshoe Race and Family Snowshoe Festival, Smugglers' Nordic Ski and Snowshoe Adventure Center, Smugglers' Notch Resort, Jeffersonville, VT, Zeke Zucker, 802-644-1173, zzucker@smuggs.com, www.smuggs.com
 12 Fight for Air: Bolton Valley Snowshoe Shuffle 5K/10K, Bolton, VT, Brynn Wikgren, bwikgren@lungne.org

SWIMMING

ONGOING

Mon., Wed., Fri., 5:30-7AM, VT Masters Swim, Twin Oaks, Farrell Street, So. Burlington, VT, Debbie Alsofrom, 802-865-2512
 Mon., Wed., Fri., 6-7AM, Masters Swimming at The Swimming Hole, coached from the water, Stowe, VT, Charlotte Brynn, 802-253-9669, cbrynn@theswimmingholestowe.com
 Tues & Thurs., 6-7AM, Coached Masters Swimming, Sports & Fitness Edge, Williston, VT, Danielle Graham, pedergraham@yahoo.com
 Daily, Masters Swim Practice, call for times, Upper Valley Aquatics Center, White River Junction, VT, Barbara Hummel, 802-296-2850, www.uvac-swim.org
 Tues. & Thurs., Edge Swim Club practice, Age Group Teams, 6-7:30PM, Sports & Fitness Edge of Williston, VT, Melinda Antonucci, 802-860-3343 ext. 21
 Tues. & Thurs., 8:30-9:30AM, Masters Swimming at The Swimming Hole, coached from the deck, Stowe, VT, Charlotte Brynn, 802-253-9669, cbrynn@theswimmingholestowe.com


Ethan Allen Biathlon Club
2011 Winter Race Series

DATES Jan 6, 13, 20, Feb 3, 10, 17

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 5 to 5:45 pm - rifle zeroing
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- 9 Nordic Downhill & Telemark Improvement Clinic with the Catamount Trail Association, Pico Peak, Killington, VT, Bob Jordan, 802-869-2784, bobjordan@earthlink.net, www.catamounttrail.org
- 16 Intro to Telemark Skiing with Wendy Bridgewater, Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe, VT, call Umiak Outfitters, Steve Brownlee, 802-253-2317, paddle@umiak.com, www.umiak.com

FEBRUARY

- 13 Intro to Telemark Skiing #2 with Wendy Bridgewater, Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe, VT, call Umiak Outfitters, Steve Brownlee, 802-253-2317, paddle@umiak.com, www.umiak.com

ONGOING

Thursdays (through March 17), Tele Thursdays, 5:30-8PM, lessons, rentals, lifts, Bolton Valley Resort, Bolton, VT, info@boltonvalley.com, www.boltonvalley.com



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- Lucy Ann (snowboard student carrying 4 A/P subjects)



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