



Snow Dance

**A Quarterly Newsletter
of the Maine Winter
Sports Center**



NEW SKI CLUB IN SOUTHERN MAINE

In the six years of the existence of the Maine Winter Sports Center there are many things for which I am immensely grateful – the way the communities have embraced our mission, the recognition these communities have received and certainly the visionary support of the MWSC trustees and the Libra Foundation, without whom none of this would have been possible.

I am also grateful, and personally moved, by the quality of people who have taken on our mission as their own. The Maine Winter Sports Center's staff and coaches are intelligent, articulate and highly motivated people, who would be successful in anything they chose to do. The people of Maine are blessed that these young men and women have chosen to focus their efforts on making a difference in the lives of our children.

Margaret Meade wrote that we should “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world, in fact it is the only thing that ever has.” The Maine Winter Sports Center coaches are doing just that, one community at a time.

The newest member of that team is Kat Bennett, a remarkable young woman. Kat is a recent graduate of Bates College, where she was a captain of the cross-country ski team and an EISA and NESCAC All-Academic team member. Most recently, Kat was a coach for the national champion New England Junior Olympic Team, while also coaching high school and middle school kids in southern Maine.

Kat is one of those people who has great energy, a quick smile and is driven by a passion to make a difference. I am proud to support Kat and her new club – the PortNordic Ski Club – that she started this spring. She has quickly become one of the most respected young ski coaches in New England and brings an intellectual curiosity to her passion that will guarantee her stature will only increase over time.

She has great ideas about how to help kids learn to love skiing before ever focusing on skiing fast. She has an impressive board that shares her commitment to building solid relationships with the local middle and high school coaches and she has an equally impressive list of people throughout the ski industry who have been impressed by her and are anxious to help her in any way they can. If you'd like to learn more about the PortNordic Ski Club you can contact Kat at: nordikat@excite.com.

*By Andy Shepard
President
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2006 JUNIOR WORLD BIATHLON CHAMPIONSHIPS OFFER HOME COURSE ADVANTAGE TO LOCAL ATHLETES



By Walt Shepard - U.S. Biathlon Team

Memories of the 2002 Junior World Biathlon Championships appear clearly in my head. As a member of the U.S. Team, I had the best races of my life that week. On the final day of the championships I found myself lined up next to biathletes from twenty-six other countries at the start of the relay competition. As the race progressed, and with clean shooting, I was consistently skiing among the lead pack. Going into the third and final loop of my opening leg, however, I was able to leave the range in second place behind Germany, the gold medal favorite. As we made our way through the stadium and back out on course, I can replay the sights and sounds of the crowd around us erupting in cheers and celebration. Caught up in all the excitement, it wasn't until after the race that I realized none of the fans were cheering for me. That will not be the case next year for American skiers, however, when Aroostook County will welcome biathletes from around the world for the 2006 Junior World Championships.

Since its inception in 1999, the Maine Winter Sports Center has built world class venues and developed leading programs to foster the growth of cross country skiing and biathlon. Six years later, athletes from towns across Aroostook County, and who have been training in MWSC's biathlon program, will be vying for a spot on the U.S. Biathlon Team. Among the eight juniors and six youths that will be named to the national team, some of the athletes will most certainly be locals.

For most athletes who are lucky enough to compete in an international event in their home country, the experience is one they cherish for a lifetime. To be able to participate in a World Championship in your hometown, however, is an opportunity that none of these young athletes will soon forget. And with crowds in Presque Isle projected to be similar to those generated at the wildly successful Fort Kent World Cup of 2004, this will surely be one of the greatest Junior World Biathlon Championships ever held.

Currently there are former Olympians and future Olympians training in Fort Kent. We are all envious of the opportunity U.S. Juniors will have this season – a chance to race with a home course advantage. But we join the rest of Aroostook County and the Maine Winter Sports Center in wishing all the athletes good luck, and I give you my personal assurance that *this* time the crowd will be cheering for you!



Sign up to Volunteer for the 2006
Biathlon Jr. World Championships by
going to:
www.maineWSC.org
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www.nordicheritagecenter.org



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GOT EXCUSES?



By Max Saenger - COO MWSC

I love excuses, and I can think of a million of them... especially when it comes to training. I have probably used more excuses for training than anyone I know. Between “rest days” and excuses for training I have figured I can’t really fit in training anyway. That’s important because I am seldom willing to make time just for a workout. But here’s my problem. You see, I like being in shape and enjoy the camaraderie of friends and neighbors after we take on a tough outdoor challenge. So how do I stay in shape and enjoy the local ski and adventure races with so little training? I use the best solution man has ever invented when faced with challenging problems- the great excuse. I have listed some of my favorites and broken them into various categories. If any of my excuses meet your particular needs, feel free to borrow. Heck, testing one of my excuses could qualify as a great excuse in its own right!

The food excuse. This is probably my number one summer and fall excuse that I call on when most other excuses look like they will not cut the mustard. I enjoy cooking, like to eat, but I’ll endure just about any physical hardship to be able to cook and eat a meal with local natural ingredients I can collect myself. I will spend countless hours hiking, biking, and running around the forests looking for dark secretive spots where delicious chanterelle mushrooms grow. In early October I have returned home exhausted with legs feeling like overcooked linguini after hours of mountain biking on old logging roads with the great excuse, “I just needed to find that spot where the chanterelles grow thick and where the partridge are easy to shoot.” After the

first few tastes of fresh partridge breast in a chanterelle cream sauce, the next excuse rolls smoothly off my tongue, “I’ll have to go back next weekend to see if the mushrooms are still up.” The best scenario is to feed this meal to a few friends and then next year they will actually provide you with a prepackaged excuse. “That meal was so good. Have you ridden out to that place...” When someone else serves up a big fat juicy excuse like that on a platter, I often find myself out the door the next day up to the ankles in a day-long marathon treasure hunt.

Another favorite spring excuse involves paddling my canoe up river so I can sneak up on an unsuspecting brook trout and then collect some tender fiddleheads. Steamed fiddleheads and corn meal-dipped brook trout are two perfect excuses for some spring paddling. I have used just about every berry, mushroom, fish and fowl as an excuse to strain and sweat my way through rivers, swamps and forests.

The guide excuse. A visiting friend from England asked if I would “guide” him on that great Maine Outdoors experience of moose watching. David arrived in mid March and the snow in Stockholm was up to the hips... of a moose.

I pulled out some old, wide touring skis and spent several hours of reconnaissance following fresh moose tracks through the forests behind my house. Classic skiing through thick trees on postholing “double tracked” moose trails is one of the best agility/balance/endurance workout combos ever invented. The next morning, with a fresh dusting of snow to help the tracking, David was excited about our chances and up for his first experience bushwhacking on snowshoes. David followed my fresh ski tracks as I cruised out in front looking for any sign of moose. I bumped into a cow and calf which fled sticking foot for foot in their old, broken-in tracks. I sprinted out to circle around and cut them off and so I could “herd” them back to David. After several more sightings and sprints my herding attempts paid off. David and I snuck quietly to within 30 yards to watch a nervous calf hiding in thick fur trees. David’s northern Maine



Russ Currier looks for a good excuse to dig into the steak, cheese and onion sandwiches Joey Bard and Dimitri Luthi are preparing over the campfire.

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THE FIRST ANNUAL AROOSTOOK YOUTH SKI FESTIVAL



By John Farra - Community Development Coach
MWSC



Hosted by the Northern Skiers Club, this first annual festival was a big hit with Aroostook County kids! In all, we had about 150 kids (ages 5-13) and around 300 people total at this inaugural event! It was designed as a new and COOL way to celebrate all the ways kids can MOVE on a pair of XC Skis!! With highlight events like the Big Air Expo, Radar Speed Skiing, Downhill Derby, as well as Jump Turns, Barrel Sprints, Obstacles Course and even Ski Joring, the kids had plenty to keep them busy and on skis for nearly 6 hours on a sunny winter day in Caribou.





***EXPECT THE 2ND ANNUAL EVENT TO BE
BACK IN CARIBOU IN MARCH 2006!***

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

WWW.YOUTHSKIFEST.ORG



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experience was complete and I had just finished my toughest interval session of the year. We warmed down skiing and snowshoeing back to the house.

Recently, I used the guide excuse to take Caribou Rotary exchange student, Dimitri Luthi out skiing with two locals for the unique Northern Maine experience of crust cruising. On April 22nd we skied for 2 and ° hours exploring the snow covered logging roads on the east side of Square Lake. For me this was a great excuse to be out on a clear cold spring morning, but I think the boys might have been counting the excursion as training since I did see a heart rate monitor and hear comments about “hammering that whole hill with a heart rate of 156.” After skiing we brought out the frying pan, made a fire and cooked up some great steak sandwiches that really capped off a great spring skiing adventure.

Guide excuses can center on any local natural, historical or cultural experience related to the local area. While not particularly creative or far fetched, the moose excuse is a multi-sport excuse with a proven success rate here in Aroostook County for any biking, hiking or canoeing excursion.

The fuel excuse. I expect to see a real surge in the use of the fuel excuse this summer as costs for gas continue to climb. Last summer I found my neighbor using the fuel excuse as he single handedly cut, loaded and split by hand 8 cord of hard wood to heat his house instead of relying solely on oil. Just after he finished getting his wood in he convinced me in a moment of weakness to come out for an early morning roller ski session. He proceeded to double pole his way up hills long after my arms gave out. The next week I was out in my own back yard cutting, loading and splitting firewood by hand.

If you find fitting in some training difficult this spring and summer, don't worry about it. Blow off training, pick a good excuse, grab a friend and go on a memorable excursion. If I happen to run into you out there someplace, I'll know you've also started using excuses for training.

Congratulations Maine State -J2 Team 2005 New England Champs!



Maine Winter Sports Center Practice Sessions Reference

March 31- 4 p.m., Testing/Try Outs—UMPI, Weiden Hall, Presque Isle

April 25-June 6: Strength and Technique sessions 4 p.m.

Tuesdays-Caribou HS

Wednesdays-Madawaska HS

Thursdays-10th Mountain Center, Fort Kent

Fridays-by appointment

June 20-August 13: Regular Training Sessions 10th Mountain and Nordic Heritage

Tuesdays-8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Wednesdays-8 a.m.

Thursdays-8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Fridays-by appointment

Saturdays-8 a.m. Site varies

For more information on MWSC programs, please visit our website at:

www.mainewsc.org

Or contact Will Sweetser at: will@mainewsc.org or 227.3322

TEAMMATES - ENCOURAGE, CHALLENGE AND INSPIRE

By Tracy Barnes - U.S. Biathlon Team

They were motivating...It was sometime in the middle of August, summer of '98, halfway through a month long training camp in Jericho, VT. It was my first ever biathlon camp.

Training consisted of two things; bounding or ski walking until your legs were so tired you couldn't walk, or roller skiing down the treacherous paved loops at the range, arms spread wide trying to catch air to slow you down, your legs in a "V" trying to snow plow on roller-skis, and your mouth open wide screaming the entire way down. On this day, besides swatting bugs off our necks, we were learning the fine art and technique of ski walking. "Up, down, up down," yelled Al Sorano, joints cracking as his ankles flexed forward and his knees flexed down. Befuddled, I looked around to see if anyone else was getting it. My sister, Lanny, obviously didn't as her legs were stiff as a board and she looked more like someone doing the robot dance than someone ski walking. Some of the other kids seemed to be getting it.

Frustrated, Al stopped everyone and asked a young boy to come out and demonstrate. The boy was fairly tall with brown hair and blue eyes, and legs as skinny as a rail. He demonstrated the proper technique of ski walking then hopped back in line. Lanny looked over at me as if to say, "Wow, how did he do that?" Another young boy jumped in line behind the first and they both proceeded to do what looked like skiing while walking in a circle in a parking lot in the middle of summer. This young boy was quite a bit shorter than the other with light brown hair and blue eyes and what looked like a serious case of chapped lips. Never the less, Lanny and I were both inspired. One day, we thought, we'd be able to ski walk just like them. So, we continued doing circles around

the parking lot, stiff-legged and awkward watching the young boys as they effortlessly moved about. We kept practicing, though, head down, determined to show the same flawless-ness the boys had shown.



He was encouraging...It was 4 years since I had my 1st biathlon camp and now I was racing at World Junior Championships in Ridnaun, Italy 2002. My legs were burning so bad I didn't think I'd be able to finish the race. I had just missed 2 targets at the shooting range and was skiing out onto the final loop of my 12.5K individual race. As I was skiing I heard someone yell, "Lanny's in 3rd place," and watched as everyone ran towards the finish line to cheer my sister on. All the excitement gave me a short burst of energy, but that's all it was, short. My coach stood at the bottom of the hill that lead out onto the loop and told me I was in 11th place and I needed 13 seconds to get into the top ten. The thought of a top ten was exciting, but 13 seconds seemed all too far away and out of reach. I then began the long climbs that would eventually bring me back to the finish line.

Everyone had since cleared the trails and begun to gather at the finish. I looked towards the long climb I had ahead of me and nothing looked more impossible. But

then, out of nowhere I recognized the same scrawny legs that I had watched years ago ski-walking in Vermont, running towards me. It was Tim Burke, who was now my teammate. He had stayed behind to cheer me on. He walked beside me along the climb and helped me pull second after second from my competitors. That day I managed to shave off the 13 seconds and more to finish 8th. The one thing that came to my mind that day was, "*teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results*". -Andrew Carnegie.

He was encouraging...A year after Ridnaun I had such high expectations and truly believed we could improve on the previous year's results. This particular day was awful. I couldn't think of a worse thing than to end my junior career with such a poor result. After the races we were all back at our hotel and I went to the boy's room to check up on one of our teammates who had fallen ill. He was the same boy who I had watched 5 years earlier ski walking behind Tim, the one with the chapped lips. His name was Walter. He asked me about the races, and like a good teammate, preceded to listen while I whined about how awful the races were. Then out of nowhere I stopped talking and looked down at him. He said to me, "Is this going to affect your life 5...10 years from now?" "No," I replied. "Then let it go," he answered, "It'll be alright." His few words meant more to me than anything. The one thing that came to mind was, "a word of encouragement during failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success." -Unknown Author.

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He was inspiring... The look on Tim's face was enough to tell that he was in pain. He was running on a treadmill at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, New York in the spring of '04. Tubes ran from his mouth down to a machine that was calculating his oxygen consumption and ultimately, his max VO2. A harness was strapped around his chest, with an attached rope to the ceiling then to someone who'd grab the rope in case Tim collapsed. Tim had been running for a while and had passed his threshold, the point where lactate starts to build up, and was now reaching his max. At this point the test becomes a matter of how much pain you can withstand and your mental toughness. Everything in your body is telling you to stop, but Tim wasn't. He was pounding away at the treadmill with his feet, alone and struggling to keep going. A few minutes later the test was over and Tim was in a heap on the treadmill trying to catch his breathe. I have never before seen someone willing to work so hard to accomplish something. The words that came to mind were, *"The height of your accomplishments will equal the depth of your convictions."* -William F. Scolavino. Tim had risen to the challenge and had not backed down.

They are Teammates... Biathlon is a sport where everything accomplished is earned. You work hard for what you get, but contrary to what most people think, you don't do it on your own. Yes, it is an individual sport, but be it not for teammates, coaches, family, friends, community, ect., no one would be where they were today, regardless of talent. When I think of people who have impacted my life in a big way, I think of the little things that make it big. Tim and Walt have been my teammates for many years now, and although they might not know it, and I might not want to admit it (especially to them), they are the epitome of teammates. They inspire,

challenge and encourage. It is the little things that add up. Being a good teammate is a big responsibility, but an important one for any team. Henry Ford once said, *"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success."* It seems to me that no matter the inconvenience Tim and Walt always offered support, whether it was standing in the cold cheering us on or showing their desire to achieve. I encourage all young Maine Winter Sports Center athletes to reach out to their teammates whether it be to pat someone on the back or to be a role model by just being yourself. *"A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but is miles ahead in the result."* - Ella Wheeler Wilcox.



MWSC MISSION STATEMENT

- * *To re-establish skiing as a lifestyle in Maine.*
- * *To leverage that lifestyle to create a new economic model for rural, isolated communities of Maine.*
- * *To further leverage that lifestyle to create opportunity for the youth of Maine.*

AT IT AGAIN !

Maine Winter Sports Center and the Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle are at it again. We are hard at work in the woods creating more mountain biking, hiking, walking, and snow shoeing trails. Rich Edwards trail designer for The International Mountain Bike Association has been in the woods at the Nordic Heritage Center editing, expanding and marking out new trails. Last year we were able to rough in and ride approximately 10 kilometers of new single track trails. We will be adding an additional 14 kilometers of trails throughout the summer months including a connector trail to Presque Isle and Caribou. All trails are for and non-motorized travel, open to the public starting May 15th and free of charge. Volunteers are needed to build the trails, so please contact Greg Rawlings of the MWSC to help 227-3885 cell.

FORT FAIRFIELD WELCOMES MWSC ATHLETES!

Hiking, biking, fishing, and swimming, these are just part of the job for Haley Johnson, Steve Scott and Kate Whitcomb who have begun their new jobs working as instructors for the MSAD#20, Fort Fairfield, 21st Century After School Program. Pictured here is the homework help and academic enrichment session that is also a vital component of the program. Within the framework of the after school program, school children strive to improve academically and socially, to learn new skills through life long activities, and to connect to school, community and parents. Who better to inspire these children than Kate, Steve and Haley, each of whom is a model of success!

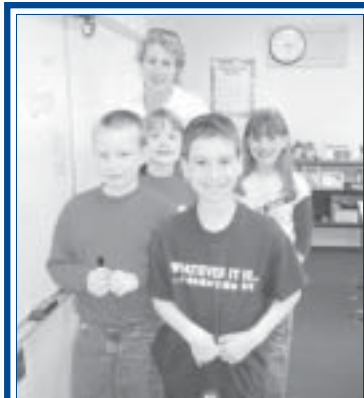
In 2004 the MWSC was asked to partner with MSAD#20 in an ambitious grant application. In the Fall of 2004, MSAD#20 was awarded a 21st Century Community Learn Center grant and subsequently launched its first after school program in January 2005. As a partner in this grant initiative, MWSC is obliged to provide top notch role models for hire, while the Fort Fairfield

School Department agrees to offer employment to qualified athletes. In the words of Program Director, Karen Saenger, "MWSC has certainly lived up to their part of the partnership. I am thrilled to have Haley and Steve and Kate all working in the program. They are responsible, creative, energetic, and compassionate – a perfect fit for our program. These athletes, together with the other highly qualified program staff, are making a difference in kids' lives!"

By Karen Saenger - Volunteer



Haley Johnson helps a youngster select reading material.



At the blackboard, Kate Whitcomb and her students practice math skills



Steve Scott listens attentively to a young reader.



Crust Cruising

In addition to regularly scheduled ski events county skiers got together to experience crust cruising at its best. The April 16th Frenchville ski venture was one of the most memorable experiences of the season, with perfect temperatures, sunshine, and a tailgate party brunch complete with wine and cheese!





Maine Winter Sports Center

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MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR COMING EVENTS!!!

Jun 12 th	Mars Uphill Run - Big Rock – Mars Hill
Jun 26 th	S.W. Collins-5K – Caribou
Jul 15 th	Potato Blossom Race – Aroostook River – Fort Fairfield
Jul 16 th	Potato Blossom 5 Miler – Fort Fairfield
Aug 27 th	Aroostook Adventure Race – Nordic Heritage Center – Presque Isle
Sep 3 rd	Mars Uphill Run – Big Rock – Mars Hill
Sep 5 th	Labor Day 8K – Caribou
Sep 10 th	Mountain Bike Race – Cary Medical Center – Caribou
Sep 17 th	Nordic Heritage Mountain Bike Race – NHC – Presque Isle
Sep 24 th	Mars Uphill Run – Big Rock – Mars Hill