

Express



Newsletter of the Western Region, Central Division, National Ski Patrol System, Inc. Nov. 2009

In This Issue

	Page
Western Region Director's Report	1
Reflections on Refreshers	2
Saying Goodbye is Hard to Do	2
CPR Refreshers	3
New WR OEC Administrator	3
Mountain Travel and Rescue "Action"	3
Mountain Travel and Rescue	4
Avalanche Update	4
Is it Your Time?	5
Instructor Development	5
Invitation to the Birkie	6
...Pull Out the Boots	6
Transportation News	7
On Hill Refresher	7
Can We Ski with You?	8
Senior Program	8
Senior Emergency Management	8
Call for Senior Examiners	9
Afton Goes Hi Tech	9
Spring Break	9
Awards	10
The Helmet Controversy	11
Slope Seasoning	12
Final Sweep	12

Published by the Western Region of the Central Division of the National Ski Patrol.

<http://www.nspwr.org>

Editors: Maggie & Michael Herman
mmbherman@charter.net

Webmaster: Roger Petry rpetry@d.umn.edu

John (JT) Thomas

WR Director jtskibum@myclearwave.net

The 2009 Fall Central Division meeting was a great success. Northern Michigan Region selected a location which was fantastic and allowed many of us from the Division to enjoy Mackinac Island. Western Region has been challenged as we host the 2010 Fall Central Division meeting in the wonderful location of Bloomington, Minnesota.

The Division Meeting committee is busy planning an event filled with great activities and is seeking help and input from all patrols in our Region. If you have any ideas to help us plan this event please contact Jeannine Mogan jmogan@threeriversparkdistrict.org. We are looking for activities that will bring Patrollers to this meeting and make it a great success! I hope to see you in Bloomington, September 10, 11 and 12 of 2010. The Division meeting is your opportunity to meet the Division Staff including the Division Director to find out first hand the direction that the NSP is heading as well as the Central Division.

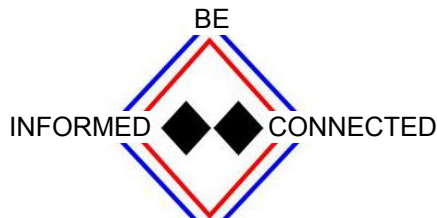


The 2009 Fall Region meeting was fantastic and was hosted by Afton Ski Patrol. Thank you to the Afton Ski Patrol for a great meeting. The fall 2010 Region meeting is being hosted by Northwest Nordic September 24, 25, and 26 of 2010. I look for a great meeting and hope many of you will plan to attend this meeting. If you have ideas or events you would like to see at the Region meeting please contact David Squires sharky@tekstar.com.

As OEC refreshers are in full swing, it is time to dust off those patrolling skills and get ready for the 2009-2010 ski season. Start thinking about your improvement goals for this upcoming season and find the courses to help meet those goals. If you don't see a course that fits your schedule or needs, email the Region advisor and see what can be scheduled to help meet your goals. Does your area have a ski enhancement seminar (SES) or toboggan enhancement seminar (TES) scheduled? If not, ask your Patrol Representative to get one scheduled or better yet, ask your PR if you can organize an event for your area. Remember you are the one who needs to own and maintain the skills you need to be a member of the NSP. It's when you take responsibility for your skills and commit to yourself to improve, you will improve. The skiing/boarding public sees us as the "best of the ski world". Working on maintaining our skills, both on and off the hill, will provide positive results for all!

I would like to thank Kathy Glynn for her many years of dedication and knowledge as the Western Region OEC Administrator (ROA). Kathy has moved the OEC program forward in many ways, including: maintaining the high pass rate at the Senior Emergency Management event (SEM) and continuing to bring new ideas and participants to the instructor-trainer (IT) staff. The Region will miss Kathy as she steps into her new role as the Assistant Division OEC supervisor. The great part is that she is not going very far, as Kathy has promised to continue to help the Western Region OEC Program. I want to wish Kathy great success in her new role. The new ROA for the Western Region is Sue Hayes from Welch Village. Sue has some very large shoes to fill and the Region is looking forward to a seamless transition as Sue begins her new job as Western Region ROA. We wish her luck as she gets through her first refresher season.

I would like to thank everyone who wrote letters and joined the conference call to influence the National Board to rescind the program fee and to look for other ways to solidify the NSP financial situation. The Central Division made



Go to www.nsp.org
Verify
Profile & Email



our voices heard. Remember, there is an election for four (4) National board members and I encourage you to voice your opinion and vote for your national board. The NSP board voting process started on October 15 and ends December 1. The Division board ranked the candidates on the posted criteria to help you make a choice. Please take the time to vote, as it is our responsibility, and your opportunity to shape the future of the NSP at this critical time.

The Western Region will be hosting a Ski Trainers Workshop (STW) at Trollhaugen, one of three in the Division. I would like to thank Trollhaugen for hosting this event again this season. The dates of the event are December 5 and 6th. Mark your calendars and see the Division WEB site for more information and registration <http://nspcentral.org/>

Awards-- whose job is it to acknowledge outstanding fellow patrollers? It is every member's responsibility to make sure our fellow members are given the recognition they deserve. This could be a critical care situation, outstanding service to the patrol or region, or many years of active participation in the system. I encourage you to talk to your PR to nominate your fellow patrollers for recognition. This could be at the patrol, region, division or national level. I also encourage you to volunteer to obtain the documentation for your PR and write it up for him/her. This information is on our Region WEB site. Please work with your PR and obtain the recognition your fellow patrollers deserve.

Staffing-- staffing the Western Region is every patroller's responsibility and it would be nice to have assistants for each advisor, to help out and to learn the operational guide lines. All jobs are much less time consuming when there are more people who pitch in to help. You get a chance to meet other members within the Region, share your knowledge, and gain knowledge from fellow patrollers. I urge you to think about volunteering to help with your favorite program. The Region staff is always looking for help. Contact the program advisor you would like to assist.

The Newsletter is for the Region members, by the Region Members. If you have information about your patrol or patrolling experience, please write an article and send it to Maggie and Mike Herman for the next newsletter. I would like to say thank you to everyone who took the time to write an article and to Maggie and Mike for all the effort to put this great newsletter together.

Thank you, have a great and safe season. See you on the snow sooner than later I hope!

John Thomas (JT)
NSP Central Division Western Region Director



Mark Gottwald, Assistant Region Director

markgnsp@gmail.com

Reflections on Refreshers

As I was attending OEC refreshers this fall, there was one thing I noticed that I am sure all of you have noticed too – the camaraderie among the patrollers. I know I have made a lot of friends in the

National Ski Patrol and it was nice to see them again. Another thing I noticed was the excitement and energy of the groups. It was palpable. Whether it was the instructors getting the scenarios together, or the patrollers cycling through the stations, there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the room. Something that always catches my attention is the new and innovative ways that other patrollers have to accomplish various tasks. One begins to realize just how much our fellow patrollers are

looking for better, more efficient ways to do things. I know I try to file away some of these ideas to share with other patrollers. Group dynamics are always interesting to watch. As I observed the groups, I noticed a few things. Some areas refresh in shift groups where the dynamics are already in place. If you watch from station to station, the lead is usually one or two people and everyone knows their role. At areas where the groups are mixed up randomly, I observed that certain people will usually step up to lead and others will follow. I was curious if the people taking the lead were senior patrollers. If they are not, they should be. The senior program is about leadership. If these patrollers that are taking the lead in refresher scenarios are not senior patrollers they are prime candidates. We should all encourage these patrollers to become senior patrollers.

The last refresher I attended was at Lutsen and Mother Nature gave us 2 to 3 inches of snow by morning. The snow reminded us that the ski season will be here soon and the urgency of our preparedness.

I know that I am pumped up and ready to hit the slopes. I hope all of you enjoy a fun and safe ski season.



Deb Endly, National Assistant OEC Program Director

ezcompany2@msn.com

Saying Goodbye is So Hard to Do, but How About a Big Thank You?

Saying goodbye is hard, no matter what the reason. Whether it is moving, leaving a job, or changing patrols, it is just plain hard to do. It is the same when one of our Western Region staff is promoted to, and has accepted, a Division position. The increase in responsibility on the Division level comes with a price that we must pay in the Western Region. Specifically, I am talking about the promotion of our own Region OEC Administrator (ROA), Kathy Glynn, being promoted to Assistant Division OEC Supervisor!!

While we want to congratulate Kathy on her appointment, it is done with a sad heart. Kathy has been a part of the Western Region OEC program since she started patrolling in 1995. Kathy jumped right in and became an OEC instructor her first year patrolling, and a short time later became an OEC IT. Kathy has held the ROA position since 2003. During this period of time, the OEC program has gone through numerous changes, and Kathy has provided the Western Region with timely updates and a willingness to travel to the far reaches of our Region to present the information directly to the patrollers through instructor recertification clinics, attending and participating in Board of Governor meetings, and at PR retreats in the spring of each year. In addition to the above, Kathy has always been willing to help with OEC Enhancement sessions, has been a presenter at annual Region meetings, and has been a ceaseless promoter of the Senior Emergency Management Program. Anyone who has participated in the SEM program has seen Kathy hard at work alongside Mary Pritchett, the Western Region SEM Coordinator.

If the Region responsibilities were not enough, Kathy has helped to organize several of the Division OEC IT Clinics and has worked on several committees related to the production of the third and fourth editions of the OEC textbook. Kathy was also instrumental in the development of the OEC Standardized final that all OEC candidates take. She has also written additional testing scenarios for both basic and senior level candidates to use in practice or in testing. And to top all of that, Kathy is currently a member of the 5th Edition Collateral Committee, helping to develop the Instructor



Manual that will accompany the 5th edition OEC textbook due out in 2010.

As you can see, Kathy has been very involved in the OEC Program on all levels and her promotion to the Division level is a testament to her hard work and dedication. Everyone in the Western Region should say a big “thank-you” to Kathy for all of the time and effort she has given to the Region as she moves on to the Division position. Our loss is the Division’s gain, in this case. However, you should know that Kathy is not totally abandoning us here in the Western Region. Kathy will continue to help Mary Pritchett with the SEM program and you will find Kathy at Hyland helping to train SEM candidates each season.

Trying to fill the big ROA shoes that Kathy leaves behind is Sue Hayes, of the Welch patrol. Sue has been active in the OEC program starting with her patrol at Frontenac and has carried over her passion for the OEC program when she joined the Welch Patrol after Frontenac closed. Sue has been active teaching OEC as well as helping at Region events for the Senior Program (both SEM as well as ski/toboggan). Sue has been mentored by Kathy for the past month or so and she has taken charge of the OEC Program as she learns from one of the best mentors anyone could ask for. Please take time to say “hello” to Sue as you see her out and about in the Region. We are looking forward to a new chapter in the Western Region OEC history books as Sue begins to put her own fingerprint on the program, and as Kathy shares her wealth of knowledge with the rest of Central Division.



Kathy Glynn, Central Division OEC Supervisor

angelw499@aol.com

CPR refreshers...as easy as ABC.

Our CPR and AED policies have not changed. As patrollers we must demonstrate our CPR skills annually, regardless of the certifying agency’s requirement or the expiration date listed on the card. All active NSP members must hold a current professional-rescuer CPR certification from an NSP approved agency. This training must include breathing and cardiac emergencies, and adult, child, infant and two-rescuer CPR techniques. If we don’t practice, our skills can become rusty and mistakes can happen. CPR is a life-saving skill, if we are called upon to perform CPR, we must be able to do it correctly. For more information regarding CPR, please check the annual Refresher Study Guide and/or the NSP’s Policies and Procedures manual 14.3.4

Please Welcome Sue Hayes

Please welcome Sue Hayes as our new Region OEC Administrator. Sue brings a wealth of experience to the position. Sue has been a patroller since 1997. She is an OEC instructor, an OEC Instructor Trainer, a Toboggan Instructor, and an Instructor Development Instructor. She is a senior patroller. Sue is a great addition to the region staff. We are lucky to have her.

I wish to thank all of the OEC Instructors and OEC IT’s for all of their time, talents and hard work; your dedication to the quality of the OEC program is amazing. Keep up the good work!



Sue Hayes, Western Region OEC Administrator

Hayes.susan@mayo.edu

New Western Region OEC Administrator

Hello everyone and let me introduce myself! My name is Sue Hayes and I am the new Region OEC Administrator (ROA). First of all I need to give a huge “thank you” to Kathy Glynn, the former ROA and the best mentor possible. She has been in charge of the OEC ship for many years and is responsible for the progress that has happened in the Western Region in that arena. Thank you also to Deb Endly and Mary Pritchett for their years of support for OEC programs including the Senior Emergency Management program.

A little about me: I’m an RN at the Mayo Clinic with a specialty in Pain Rehabilitation and Psychiatry. I’ve been a patroller since 1997 starting at Mt. Frontenac and have been at Welch Village since 2003. I’m a Senior (!) now and have great passion for all of the programs put forth by the NSP. It’s our “continuing education” and I believe we owe it to our patients, our colleagues, our area and beyond to spend the time both on the hill and off improving our skills. My belief is that education and skill improvement is the best investment we can make. Knowledge is power.

What are you doing each and every day to improve your OEC skills? Get involved first with your patrol by taking the courses and steps necessary to become an OEC instructor. Teaching is a great way to improve your understanding and knowledge as well as your skills. Learning something is important, but when you take that next step to explain it and teach it to another person it is cemented in your memory. Offer to teach, ask for feedback about your teaching. Watch as many teachers as you can to get a better idea of what works and what doesn’t. Offer to help at Basic and Senior level exams. Watch the Region web site when we put out the call for helpers and evaluators at final exams for both Basic and the Senior Emergency Management.

Are you already an OEC instructor? You are an important piece of the NSP OEC program and a role model to your fellow patrollers. Share your expertise by mentoring a new instructor. Sharing your knowledge makes all of us better. Programs that will take you to the next level are the Senior Emergency Management (SEM) portion of the Senior Patroller program. Here you develop and hone your ability to manage difficult scenarios, expand your leadership and start to think “out of the box”. These are all valuable tools for everyone while patrolling or in your career. Consider talking to your Patrol Representative about becoming an OEC Instructor Trainer. Broaden your scope of practice! The Region needs you!! I look forward to seeing you on the slopes this season!



**Derk Renwick, Instructor
Western Region Mountain Travel and Rescue**

Buck Hill Ski Patrol

renwick@umn.edu

Mountain Travel and Rescue: the “Action Suit” Philosophy

Layering your clothing is an essential skill for enjoying activities in outdoor winter environments. The versatility of this system has a number of demonstrated benefits: multiple, light-weight garments trap and hold air between each layer, temperature regulation is controlled through addition and removal of layers, and moisture is



controlled through wicking and frequent adjustment. The basic components of the layering system are 1) a wicking base layer, 2) breathable insulation layers, and 3) a protective outer shell. The idea is to build an adjustable cocoon of warm air with loose-fitting, easy on-off clothing for micro-adjustment of your immediate environment throughout the day's activities.

Your level of preparation and experience, e.g. your knowledge of equipment, skills, and the expected weather forecast, as well as the number of times you have participated in different field activities during varying weather conditions, will determine the number and type of layers you use. You typically wear more layers at the beginning of your activity, when stopping for rest, water, or food, and **when telling lies around the campfire**. During periods of high-level activity, removal of layers allows for adjustment of heat and moisture, keeping your cocoon at a safe and comfortable equilibrium and your muscles operating at optimum efficiency.

Mark Twight, a prominent American mountaineer and technical director of Mountain Mobility Group, LLC, has developed a variation of the traditional layering system that considers certain nuances when participating in sustained physical activities such as mountain travel and Nordic skiing: the "action suit" philosophy. The "action suit" philosophy promotes a subtle shift to the traditional layering system: instead of adding and removing insulation layers *under* the protective shell, layer *over* the top.

The well-conditioned, well-fueled human combustion engine operates at a high level of efficiency for many hours each day. The human body will function at a relatively consistent level of energy output during this time. The "action suit" keeps you cool so you don't overheat and you don't over-sweat. Warmth is managed by physical activity and by placing bulky layers over the top of the "action suit" during periods of rest. When patrolling in a typical alpine ski and snowboard environment, you will spend much of your time on a chairlift, on-scene assisting an injured guest, or interacting with the alpine community. Often there are indoor facilities available for rest and warmth, and the traditional layering system is ideal for this type of stop-and-go activity. The "action suit," however, provides consistent temperature and moisture regulation during extended periods of sustained activity:

Begin with a basic wicking layer and add only those layers that are appropriate for the highest level of sustained physical activity and expected environmental conditions. This is the same combination of clothing you would wear during peak times of exertion under the traditional layering system, however the "action suit" serves as your second skin—a breathable layer of protection tailored to the environment that you do not remove. Moisture control is essential for maintaining a safe and efficient, comfortable cocoon, and each layer of the "action suit"—base, insulation, and shell—must wick and/or breathe. When you cease activity for an extended period of time, place a thick, insulating layer, such as a synthetic parka, *over the top* of your "action suit." When you are ready to get back on the trail, simply remove the parka and you are poised for peak levels of performance, once again.

Additionally, the "action suit" philosophy considers items you carry on your person that factor into the system. For instance, consider your backpack: many outdoor enthusiasts carry a large, internal-frame pack for extended periods in the backcountry. Modern, internal-frame packs are constructed with padding, e.g. insulation, which covers a significant portion of the torso. Many outdoorswo/ men will attest to the discomfort of the rapid cooling that accompanies a sweat-soaked back when the pack finally comes off! Pack designers have tried to account for this with airflow technology, however the traditional layering system often counters this solution by filling the airspace with the bulk of many, loose-fitting layers. The "action suit" philosophy considers this problem

by incorporating pack insulation and its effect into and upon the cocoon.

Western Region Mountain Travel and Rescue courses explore fundamental and advanced techniques of mountain and Nordic travel, including complete instruction in the principles of building safe, efficient, and comfortable clothing systems. Join us in 2009–2010 as we share the many skills and methods available to enhance your enjoyment of, and safety in, the great outdoors. Contact me at renwick@umn.edu, or Daryl Coons, Western Region MTR Advisor, at essebon@hotmail.com for an updated schedule of Western Region Mountain Travel and Rescue courses offered in 2009–2010.



Daryl C. Coons, Jr., Western Region Mountaineering
essebon@hotmail.com

Mountain Travel and Rescue; Search and Rescue

We will be presenting a MTR-Fundamentals course for Christie Mountain Ski Patrol, and those interested in adding to their *outdoor skills and experiences*.

You will learn proper nutrition and hydration philosophy, clothing selection, as well as knowing which equipment may be best to carry, and an expanded knowledge of basic survival skills, how to safely camp outdoors, prepare meals outdoors, as well as emergency skills of survival for yourself and finding, saving others.

This is a **must course** for anyone who goes in the outdoors: skiers, hunters, fisherman, snowmobilers.....anyone who wants to be in the outdoors safely.....and comfortably.

Course date: Saturday and Sunday, January 16th & 17th, 2010
Where: Christie Mountain Area
Cost: \$25.00
Come join us for fun and knowledge!!!



Kristi A. Olson, Western Region Avalanche Supervisor
live2skimountains@hotmail.com

Avalanche Update

The NSP national avalanche program has gone through some major revisions in the last 12 months. Recognizing that Western Region does not have the snow pack requirements for participants to fully participate in adequate field work; much of this component of the course will be taught at an additional time/place decided upon by the student (s). Regular classes are still being held in the Region and participants will be given their options for the additional training at that time. **The Region course does count as a Senior Elective.** If any Region Patrol would like to host an Avalanche class in 2010; contact Kristi Olson. The Central Division Avalanche Level 2 Course will be held in Utah March 12th–20th, 2010. For more information, contact Dale Mihuta, Division Advisor (dmihuta@fuse.net).





Dale R. Mihuta, Central Division, Avalanche Advisor

dmihuta@fuse.net

Is it Your Time?

Is it your time to ski the powder in big mountains? Well you can, by taking the Level 2 Avalanche course in Utah. First you must take the Level 1 for Rescue Personnel avalanche course. The Central Division Avalanche Group is trying to make that possible. We have the Level 1 course available near you. The courses are listed below. Also the Level 1 course is going to be available at the divisional ski and toboggan training event at Boyne Highlands on December 12th and 13th. For course reservations contact me at dmihuta@fuse.net. We can make this work for you.

Ohio Region: Level 1 for Rescue Personnel at Perfect North Slopes; November 14th and 15th

Contact: Kim Garrett at kwgarr@aol.com

Eastern Michigan: Level 1 Course; November 15th

Contact: Derek Werner at derek.werner@usa.net

North Central: Level 1 for Rescue Personnel;

January 2nd and 3rd at Marquette Mt.

Contact: Randy Tufts at randytufts@yahoo.com

All Regions at the Divisional S&T Meeting:

Level 1 for Rescue Personnel; December 12th and 13th

Contact: Dale R. Mihuta at dmihuta@fuse.net

Snow and Field Sessions:

Whiteface Mt. in upstate New York; February 13th

Mt. Bohemia in the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan
March 6th

Contact: Dale R. Mihuta

The Level 2 Avalanche Course for Rescue Personnel

March 12th through the 20th Held in Utah

Contact: Dale R. Mihuta



Bob Iverson, Western Region Instructor Development Supervisor

ivers043@umn.edu

Instructor Development Program has an Active Fall Season

The Instructor Development program has had an active Fall schedule with courses held at Brainerd (7 participants), Duluth (4 participants), and Afton Alps (8 participants). The Instructor Development Course is required to become an instructor in any of the NSP disciplines--OEC, MTR, Transportation (OET), Avalanche, and Instructor Development.



Erick Nolting, Darrell Dwire, John Vanderlinden, Jim Hutchison, Katie Hutchison, and Todd Lyscio (not pictured Rick Litke) take part in a six pack lesson during the Brainerd ID Course.

The course covers various topics such as: how adults learn, management of instruction, instructor resources, methods, monitoring, and lesson planning. The course cannot make you a teacher in the eight hours allotted for the course, but it can give you more than enough information and enough practical skills to get you started. Learning to be a great instructor comes from teaching experience and this is built into the Instructor Development program. After the ID Course is completed, Candidates enter the mentoring phase. In this phase, the candidate will work with an experienced instructor, in the discipline of choice, to gain some of that practical teaching experience. This is "on the job training" and once this part is completed the candidate is signed off to become a certified NSP instructor.

The next Instructor Development Course will be held at Buck Hill on January 12 and 19 (two consecutive Tuesdays). Please refer to the Region Website Calendar for registration information.



Mark Nyholm, Jim Hill and Chris LaFleur (and Mark Pannkuk's hands) take part in a six pack lesson during the Duluth ID Course.



Sue Hayes, Heidi Bagley, Beth Ronning, Ben Scheidel, Ben Henry, Bill Cahalan (hat visible), Steve Hagelberger, Jessica Johnson, and Bob Roper at the Afton Alps ID Course.





Peter Wollan, Western Region Nordic Supervisor

Peter.wollan@gmail.com

An Invitation to the Birkie

What's a Birkie? The American Birkebeiner is the premier cross-country ski race in the US. Around 9,000 racers start from Cable, Wisconsin, and go either 50 kilometers (the full Birkie, ending in Hayward WI) or 25 k (the half-Birkie, or Kortelopet, ending back in Cable). In addition to the racers, these small towns are full of family members, bystanders, support people – and lots of Ski Patrollers. The race itself is on **Saturday, February 27** this year, but side events start a couple of days earlier and continue into Sunday. It's a colorful, festive circus and a party as well as an internationally recognized athletic event, and it's a whole lot of fun.

Ski Patrol provides first aid on the trail. We start from staggered positions along the trail, at staggered times, and ski along with the racers, watching for problems. (We ski slower than they do). Most of the problems are minor – exhaustion, equipment problems, scrapes or blisters – but there are always a few more serious cases, from dislocations or broken bones to heart attacks. Many of the minor injuries can get themselves to the next food station, where they can be driven out of the woods, but if necessary we radio for a snowmobile, which evacuates the patient out to an ambulance.

The event begins for most of us when we arrive in Hayward Friday evening for a big patrol dinner and orientation session. Rooms are hard to find that weekend, but we have lodging in the Hayward school – sleeping bags on a classroom floor, or some softies bring cots and airbeds. Early (very early) Saturday morning, we meet again for breakfast, and take buses out to our assigned positions along the trail. We ski our stretch, bus back, have a debriefing followed by a feast, and then we collapse back on our classroom floor. Sunday morning there's a breakfast for those who can linger. In other words, we do more eating than skiing – but there's a lot of skiing, too.

Most of the patrollers ski a 25 kilometer stretch of the trail. There are some shorter assignments, around 10-15 k, and there are also some non-skiing patrol assignments, such as the finish line (checking for hypothermia and exhaustion), and a few spots along the trail which are known to generate a lot of injuries. Which brings me to my Invitation: we need more patrollers. We'd prefer that patrollers for the Birkie have their Nordic Patroller certification. **But.** The race was once just a single trail, with the Kortelopet racers stopping at the half-way mark. A few years ago, the Kortie was split off into the Telemark Resort trails, circling back and ending at the Telemark Lodge. This pleased everybody, reducing congestion on the trail and giving the town of Cable its own finish line, with the accompanying crowds and hoo-ha, but it also divided the patrollers and gave us more trail to cover. Then, last year, the race organizers built a separate, parallel Classic trail to allow separation between the classic diagonal striders and the skaters. Again, everyone is pleased – but we need more patrollers.

If you feel that you can ski 25 k, we'd love to have you out on the trail with us. If you're not sure about 25 k but could ski 10 or 15, great. If you've never been on cross country skis, ask for a non-skiing patrol position. We can use you. To sign up, or just to get more information, write to Howard Holz, howard@holzconsulting.com.

The Birkie is an extraordinary event, and as patrollers we make a significant contribution to the safety of the racers. It's an honor to participate in it. And it's a whole lot of fun. Come join us.



**Cindy and Jim McLeod
NSP-C/PSIA Ski School
Coordinator and NSP-C/PSIA
Ski School Supervisor**
cjmcleod@d.umn.edu

WEEELLLLL it is time to pull out the Boots!

As I sit to write this article, it is hard to believe the ski season is almost upon us, well not really considering the weather we have been having, I think winter is here without the snow. In the Spring newsletter I left you all with a tip.... "Take a piece of paper and write down what you have been working on in your skiing, exercises that help, and how you know when you achieve the desired results. Put this paper in your boot and next season as the snow begins to fall you will have a focus for those first few runs down the slope." WEEELLLLL it is time to pull out the boots, read the piece of paper, start stretching, doing those balance exercises and sign up for SES's.

Ski Enhancement Seminars are designed to:

- Improve the skiing skills of NSP members
- Improve patroller image with ski industry and public by improving ski ability
- Enhance NSP/PSIA/AASI relationship through professionally organized ski instruction
- Maintain interest in sport and improvement of member benefits

COST: \$15.00 payable at time of instruction. This charge is for a full day ski lesson with a PSIA Level 2 or 3 Instructor. What a DEAL! Like a Blue Light Special at Wal-Mart or is that K-Mart? REGISTER EARLY so we can have Six to eight participants per PSIA/AASI instructor.

Every participant should come away from the lesson learning something. YET feeling confused. ("I thought I could ski!" BUT!!!) AND frustrated, you just can't get it right. ("I was balanced, using all my edges, rotating and applying pressure correctly!") Does anyone even remember BERP from other seminars? We wish to challenge the participants using new techniques or exercises, but keep it safe and within the comfort zone of all, giving everyone something to work on and improve their skiing (like "OH! I finally got it!!!") Even strong skiers can benefit from a few different ideas, especially since the intent is not to change your entire technique, but to simply increase efficiency.

We all encounter wide varieties of skill levels across the country. Patrollers who ski at steeper mountains tend to be fairly well balanced and relatively strong skiers. They may not need to spend a lot of time on the issues of balance and alignment, while weaker groups may focus on that topic for most of the day. We want to challenge the stronger skiers by taking the concepts of turn shape and speed control to varying conditions and steeper terrain, or use more difficult tasks if clinic terrain is limited.

We want all participants to be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- identify personal skiing strengths and weaknesses,
- identify good balance and alignment in self and peers,
- ski with improved efficiency (turn shape and speed control),
- develop (with the PSIA/AASI seminar instructor) some activities/exercises for continued improvement, and
- identify opportunities for further learning.

We have a busy season for Ski Enhancement Seminar's in our region set up already and have dates still open. If interested, please email us at cjmcleod@d.umn.edu. If these dates do not work please let us know and we will try to arrange it for your hill. Registration on Western Region site: <http://www.d.umn.edu/~nspscdwr/>



SES schedule to date:

Spirit – Dec 12

Christie – Jan 10

Buck – Jan 17

Open – Jan 23

Open – Jan 24

Welch – date tentative Feb 21

Lutsen – Feb 27

Open – March 15



Ron Sluka, Western Region Emergency Transport (Toboggan) Supervisor

rsluka@d.umn.edu

Greetings from the Transportation Staff

Greetings to all PR/PD's and Western Region Patrollers. I'm excited to announce Cindy McLeod and David Bramel as assistants to the

Transportation Program. Cindy patrols at Spirit MT

and Lutsen, oversees the Senior Training program in both Toboggan and OEC, has her National appointment, is an IT candidate and has patrolled for over 25 years, and David Bramel Patrols at Afton Alps and oversees the On-the-Hill refresher and is an IT candidate. Both Cindy and David, along with the IT staff, will provide training for all of the hills in the region. Whether you call for an IT to assist with an On-the-Hill refresher, or you would like to sharpen your toboggan skills by providing a TES, the transportation program has the knowledge and skills. The Giants Ridge Patrol had a TES last year for the entire patrol and the Transportation Program provided three ITs and six Certified Toboggan Trainers from other ski hills to provide a successful day of toboggan training. Other news from the Transportation Program: for all Senior Patrollers wanting to expand your teaching skills, the Transportation Program is actively recruiting new ITs. Perhaps you are that patroller, to provide the advanced training at your own hill? This you can find in Cindy's article along with David's insight on how important it is to attend Region events.

Contact any of the three of us if you have questions or need more information.



Cindy McLeod, Western Region Emergency Transport (Toboggan) Assistant

cjmcleod@d.umn.edu

Keeping Track...On-Hill Refresher

On-Hill Transportation Refresher is a new course offered by NSPS. Many patrols have conducted On-Hill Refreshers yearly BUT now there is a way to track your members for you and your management team. The designated patroller responsible for On-Hill Refreshers should register and close the course. The date of when the last time a patroller completed the On-Hill Refresher will be printed on the member card. This course will also have the same liability insurance coverage as all other NSP courses. Any questions feel free to email Cindy McLeod, Emergency Transport (Toboggan) Assistant at cjmcleod@d.umn.edu, Dave Bramel, Emergency Transport (Toboggan) Assistant at dbram@aol.com, Ron Sluka, Emergency Transport (Toboggan) Supervisor at rsluka@d.umn.edu.

ON-HILL TRANSPORTATION REFRESHER Course guidelines:

TARGET USERS: Any interested NSP members

FREQUENCY: Determined by area management and patrol representative.

REFRESHER COORDINATOR: Ski area management

REFRESHER INSTRUCTOR: NSP Transportation Program (alpine

or nordic) instructor

REFRESHER GOALS

- Examine basic skiing/snowboarding skills of patrollers
- Review NSP and area requirements for safe toboggan handling
- Review local area procedures for toboggan handling
- Improve patroller image with ski industry and public by improving overall skiing/riding and transportation ability
- Maintain interest in the sport and enhance member benefits

REFRESHER COST: None

RECOMMENDED CLASS SIZE: Varies by area, but adequate instructor-to-student ratio must be maintained.

REFRESHER NOTES: Area management determines all on-hill training and skills requirements for patrollers, and the patrol representative/director is responsible for organizing training and on-hill refresher courses to meet those requirements. The on-hill transportation refresher should examine the transportation performance objectives designed for patrollers by area management. In addition, it should examine a patroller's skiing/snowboarding ability and familiarity with area policies and procedures. In order to perform many toboggan-handling skills, patrollers must have exceptional skiing or riding technique.

Transportation instructors are encouraged to use the information below as a guide when developing on-hill refresher courses related to toboggan handling and transportation for all patrol disciplines.

REFRESHER ESSENTIAL CONTENT - Concluding Objectives:

- Review and demonstrate the necessary skiing/riding skills and maneuvers to operate a toboggan at the ski area.
- Review equipment used for rescue at their area.
- Review the particular terrain and route selection.
- Demonstrate proper operation of an unloaded toboggan.
- Demonstrate proper management of an incident scene.
- Demonstrate proper operation of a loaded toboggan.

Review and demonstrate belaying techniques.

Instructors should evaluate patrollers' skiing and riding

proficiencies based on their performance of the following tasks:

Alpine Skiing/Snowboarding Skill Proficiency Review

- a run on moderate to difficult terrain, performing short-, medium-, and long-radius turns while demonstrating effective balance, edging, rotation, and pressure-control skills,
- a run on steep terrain or a mogul field while demonstrating stability and control,
- an equipment-carry run through varied snow conditions and terrain, and
- a controlled run while demonstrating wedge, sideslip, transition, and emergency stop maneuvers.

Nordic Skill Proficiency Review: (while carrying standard patrol packs)

- a run over moderate to difficult rolling terrain on a groomed track while demonstrating efficient forward motion in flat-track, uphill, and downhill techniques; and
- a three- to four-hour ski tour over varied terrain (both on- and off-track) while demonstrating the physical endurance necessary to deal with emergency search and rescue situations in any terrain or weather.

Alpine Toboggan-Handling Review - patrollers should be able to:

- transport the toboggan to a simulated incident site,
- safely approach an injured skier while straight-running, turning, or side slipping or while performing an emergency stop,
- position the unloaded toboggan at the incident site,
- control and lead a loaded toboggan on the area's moderate to difficult terrain,
- make appropriate route selections, and
- perform a sideslip (forward, backward, and straight down), wedge, and transition maneuvers; braking techniques; straight-



running; and fall-line and traverse technique on the front and back of a loaded toboggan.

Nordic Toboggan-Handling Review - patrollers should be able to:

- transport a commercial nordic toboggan to a simulated accident site;
- fabricate an emergency toboggan at a simulated accident site with materials carried in a standard patrol pack;
- establish an effective belay system;
- work as part of a team of three or four patrollers;
- transport a loaded toboggan (commercial or improvised) over varied terrain (uphill or downhill, wide or narrow trails) while providing a controlled, smooth and comfortable ride;
- demonstrate proper selection of knots, anchors, and belay positions;
- make appropriate route selections;
- perform a sideslip (forward, backward, and straight down), kick turn, step turn, wedge and braking techniques, transition maneuvers, diagonal stride and herringbone technique, fall-line technique, and traverse techniques from control, load-hauling, and braking positions.

Local Alpine Patrol Policies Review: (Transportation policies vary from area to area)

- area and patrol operation procedures including sign-in, patrol assignments, duty rotation, relief, and sweep;
- the location, degree of difficulty, length, and names of all trails within the area's boundaries;
- the location of all toboggan stations,
- the procedures for checking out, returning, and restocking toboggans; and
- the area's and patrol's communication systems.

Local Nordic Patrol Policies Review: (also be familiar with the Local Alpine Patrol Policies above and)

- survival objectives designed for the specific area being patrolled; and
- search and rescue procedures.

WRAP-UP: Provide additional opportunity for questions and answers.



**David Bramel, Western Region,
Emergency Transport (Toboggan)
Assistant**
dbram@aol.com

"Hello!, Can we come and ski with you?"

Greetings! My name is David Bramel, patrolling at Afton Alps. In addition to patrolling, I am in charge of Afton Alps On-the- Hill training

program. New for this season, I have been asked by Ron Sluka if I would assist him in supervising the Western Region Transportation Program. Saying yes, to that, is why you find me here today!

The theme of this year's Western Region meeting was "coming together". It certainly was a strong welcoming message for the meeting. Continuing that theme, the transportation program would like to move into the new season with the same message. Coming together at the Western Region meeting helped remind each of us how talented our peers are from across this great region. It also gave us a moment to compare notes and discuss the things we need to improve. So this season, let's do that. Let's really come together and get this great Western Region on the same page! What better way than the positive experience of a quality learning program like TES?

It's true you may recognize those three letters as a Toboggan Enhancement Seminar, but this year let's think about TES in a new light. How about Together Each is Successful or perhaps Teaching Encourages Success, what about Toboggan Excitement Seminar! Any way you say it, we will bring all the excitement and education of TES to a Ski Area near you. Host a TES at your local ski area. Contact us, we are ready, willing and able to bring it to you!



**Terrie Brandt, Western Region Senior
Program Coordinator**
brandtdt@charter.net
**Calling All Patrollers who want to have
Fun!**

The Senior Program is to encourage all patrollers to improve their patrol knowledge and skills through a program of continuing education and evaluation. Through the Senior Program, patrollers should develop increased ability and confidence and, in turn, provide better service to the skiing public. It provides an outlet for the patroller who seeks personal achievement through definable goals.

It's time to register for Western Region events and clinics. All participants need to register. This includes candidates, evaluators, students, and patients. In other words, anyone coming to the events needs to register.

Thanks to Roger Petry, this is a very simple process. All you need to do is go to the Western Region Calendar: www.d.umn.edu/~nspscdwr/ Click on the hot link and fill out the appropriate application that will come up.

If you are a first time senior candidate, you will need to get your PR's approval. This application is also found at this website. The deadline to have this senior candidate application completed and turned in is **December 15th**. ** No Exceptions. **

The region staff is here to serve you, so please let us know what additional programs or clinics you want at a ski area close to you. The programs are intended as refreshers or continuing education to help strengthen your ski patrol skills and have fun. So if you have not been to a region clinic for awhile, why don't you plan to attend one this year, because, in the words of Warren Miller, "If you don't do it this season, you will be one year older when you do."



**Mary Pritchett, Western Region Senior Emergency
Management Coordinator**
mpritch707@msn.com

OMG, English 101 !!!

What, huh, uh me write an article for the newsletter? OMG, I can write a scenario in 10 minutes but an article??? Let me just say English 101 was not my forte! (As you will soon see). Okay, well JT wants an article and I have a lot to say so here goes.....

Hi all! As we are about to embark on another ski season, I'm proud to say I will again be the SEM (Senior Emergency Management) Advisor for the Western Region. As years go by, people always ask "why do you keep on doing this?" For those of you who have been involved in SEM, you know the answer is simple. We have an outstanding group of people, who want to help patrollers develop skills, so they can give the best possible care to their patients. And for me the friendships I have developed over the years are, to say the least, numerous and genuine.



For those of you who know me, you know I take great pride not only in training candidates for SEM, but carefully setting up pre-courses for the best learning experience possible, as well as, putting together a very comprehensive and fair final evaluation.

I have been involved in the SEM program for about 15 years. I have been the advisor since 1996. Some people call me dedicated, others call me crazy. The fact is I love this program. For me, I feel every aspect of this program is worthwhile. From writing scenarios for pre-courses, to training our local candidates, to organizing the final evaluation, there is never a dull moment and never a time when I myself don't learn something.

I have great joy in this program, watching a candidate train and work hard and then pass the SEM final. But really, the greatest satisfaction is watching a patroller develop skills and confidence that will help provide top notch care to our patients, no matter what the circumstance.

Kathy Glynn (thank you Kathy!) this year has distributed, to almost every patrol in the Region, a new SEM packet that we devised last spring. This was put together largely so SEM Candidates could have a guide to requirements and suggested training. It also contains information about registration, completion logs and general information regarding the SEM program and testing format. Please check with your Patrol Representative or Senior trainer to see the packet.

I guess this is where I make my pitch. If you are a patroller who wants to go that extra step and work on leadership, problem solving and decision making, then don't be shy. We have a whole region of people who want to see you make your goal! You can register right on the Region Website (thanks Roger Petry). The registration deadline for SEM candidates is December 15th. If you haven't been to an SEM event in a while, then please come out and see what it's all about. If you are a Senior Patroller or not and you just want to help with our events then contact us. We have many jobs available and I guarantee you will have a good time.

The 2010 pre-courses are: 1/30 at Andes, 2/27 at Buck and the final evaluation is 3/13 at Coffee Mill. There you have it! Please come be a part of our great program. I hope to see you all soon!



Mike Nies, Western Region Proficiency Supervisor

nieselectric@gmail.com

A Call for Senior Examiners

Hello everyone, Welcome to a new year of Skiing. I would like to put out a call for any senior patroller interested in becoming an examiner to come to the Division Training and testing clinic at Trollhaugen on the 5th & 6th of December and to the

Evaluators Clinic on the 2nd & 3rd of January at Wild Mountain.

This year our pre-courses will be at the following locations:

Saturday, Jan 9th Giants Ridge

Saturday, Jan 16 Buena Vista in Bemidji

Saturday, Feb 7th Christy Mountain

We are working on one for Welch Village and a possible one for Mt Kato.

The Final Evaluation will be at Wild Mountain on Saturday, February 20th. This year we are limiting the number of candidates to examiners. If we have too many, we will run a second test.

Remember. Think Snow! Not the wet stuff.

Tom Long and Barb Tyler

Afton Alps Ski Patrol

baty@usinternet.com

Afton Alps Ski Patrol Goes Hi-Tech

The Afton Alps Ski Patrol has entered the 21st century. They didn't just limp in, but rather dove in head first, thanks primarily to a very savvy and incredibly energetic computer IT/ patroller by the name of Kent Anderson.

It started with the concept of an electronic card swipe check-in/ check-out and an online system by which patrollers can electronically choose their shifts. When checking in for a shift, the patroller simply swipes their employee pass and the system automatically documents time-in, who is on shift, and how many hours? Shift points for each patroller are accumulated for the season. When checking out, the same is true. At the end of the year, a push of the button creates a report identifying every patrollers accumulated hours/shift points. If a patroller, at years end, has not completed their minimum requirements their employee benefits are cancelled, via their employee pass, for the next season.

Scheduling is done online by each patroller now. If an emergency comes up and a patroller cannot make a shift, he simply sends out a plea for a replacement to the entire patrol via our newly created Google group email address. Those that can take the shift respond to all so everyone knows that the shift is covered. This has virtually eliminated "no shows".

Afton has also put into service VH1 video technology. Candidates are recorded skiing during training, then their videos are analyzed with them by our trainers and a PSIA Level III ski instructor. This is much like golf instructors shooting video of students. It has proved to be very helpful.

Afton Alps Ski Patrol has also created a very impressive website. Our Webmaster, Bob Hart is to thank for this. He keeps it current and makes sure it's the best that it can be. He has included a photo roster of all patrollers which has proven to be extremely popular. These are huge strides for a patrol that used to do everything by paper. Change is inevitable and not always welcome in our lives, but these changes have been unanimously accepted and praised by our patrollers and has made the P.D.'s job and the scheduler's job much, much easier.



Tom Wieczorek, Western Region Activities Director

tom.wieczorek@bendtec.com

Spring Break in Northern Minnesota

Family Ski Patrol 2nd Annual Spring Break at Lutsen MT, March 27th & 28th

Activities are being planned for the whole family: Ski & Toboggan racing, food, and much more to come!

Keep watching the NSP calendar for registration and sign-up.





Tom Gray, Western Region Awards Advisor

nspski@duluthmn.com

Notes from the Region Awards Advisor

Our Western Region Fall Meeting and Awards Banquet has again come and gone. The Banquet and Awards Presentation had a very good attendance (if you consider 150 or so out of a possible 1200 good). We know that it seems like quite a bit to ask, to have everyone spend the time and money for **ANOTHER SKI PATROL** event.

The idea or hope is to be there to help recognize fellow patrollers for the work they've done for The National Ski Patrol, the Central Division, the Western Region, their local patrol and in some cases the public. It's also a time to interact with fellow patrollers, maybe learn a few things or learn of a new way to do some old things. It's a chance to meet and talk with your Region Staff and to find out what's been happening and what we have to look forward to.

Next year, the Western Region is going to host the Central Division Meeting at the new Hilton Hotel in Bloomington and then two weeks later Northwest Nordic will be hosting the Fall Region Meeting and Awards Banquet in the Detroit Lakes area. It would be really nice if we had lots of awards to present. The Section Chiefs have been given the task to try and get awards from each patrol. If you have some deserving individuals, contact your Section Chief, your at large member of the Region Awards Committee, an Assistant Region Director, or me, the Region Awards Advisor for help. Check out the names and contact info and dates on the region website.

Award recipients for this year were:

PERMANENT OUTSTANDING AWARDS FOR 2007 – 2008

Outstanding OEC Instructor	Joann Kuntemeier	Wild Mt.
Outstanding Instructor	Lisa Borneman	Buck Hill
Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol	Spirit Mountain	
Outstanding Alpine Patroller	Vicki Zierden	Hyland

CENTRAL DIVISION RECOGNITION

Vicki Young Central Division Outgoing OEC Supervisor

CENTRAL DIVISION DIRECTOR'S PROGRAM AWARD

Peter Wollan Most Valuable Patroller in the Central Division Nordic Program

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION PLAQUE

Afton Alps

CENTRAL DIVISION CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Myron Jacobson Afton Alps

WESTERN REGION CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Kent Anderson	David Bramel	Mish Eggers
Dick Krismer	Ken Liddell	Cathy Luoma
Tom Long	Jon Mackereth	Jill Nothwehr
Joan Purrington	Tom Slavic	Susan Vermeland
Tamie Ward	Roger Petry	

10th MOUNTAIN DIVISION AWARD

Terry Spohn Three Rivers Park Ski

WESTERN REGION OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARDS

Davide Friedman	Buck Hill
Rebecca Heinemann	Buck Hill
Donald Gilson	Christie Mtn
Julie Kenyon	Christie Mtn

Daniel Mansur	Christie Mtn
Mike Weber	Powder Ridge
Mike Lindgren	Powder Ridge
Joe Kreitzer	Trollhaugen
Tom McConville	Viking Nordic & Three Rivers
John Sievert	Welch Village
Bridget Skelton	Coffee Mill

PATROLLER'S CROSS

Kandra Thormforde	Buck Hill
Dennis Huffman	Welch Village
Christina Van Nurden	Coffee Mill

YELLOW MERIT STAR

Lyle Johnson Wild Mountain

CENTRAL DIVISION CRITICAL CARE CERTIFICATES

January 13, 2008 Incident at Afton Alps

Pam Wagner Dave Plucinack

December 21, 2008 Incident at Afton Alps

Kevin Gehler

January 2, 2009 Incident at Afton Alps

Kendra Fjerstad

January 10, 2009 Incident at Afton Alps

John Piehowski

January 10, 2009 Incident at Trollhaugen

Karen Fossum Emily Honerbrink

February 7, 2009 Incident at Trollhaugen

Paul Gilbertson Peter Nora

Chris Olson Colin J Sullivan

February 16, 2009 Incident at Spirit Mountain

Jim Kearns David Hawkinson

Thomas Henning Steven Welsh

March 29, 2009 Incident at Spirit Mountain

Cathy Andberg Peter Branca

Thomas Bridge Richard Ek

David Halver James Hill

Robert Roper Warren Wagness

Kristie Wilke

PURPLE MERIT STAR

George Balach Spirit Mountain

Dave Navarro Welch Village

Chad Schiefert Coffee Mill

REGION DIRECTOR'S EXCELLENCE AWARD

Scott Young Three Rivers

WESTERN REGION OUTSTANDING AWARDS FOR 2008 – 2009

Outstanding Alpine Patroller	William 'Bill' Lappen	Buck Hill
Outstanding OEC Instructor	Elliot Weinstein	Buck Hill
Outstanding Young Adult	Tom McCary	Buck Hill
Outstanding Patrol Representative	Tom Long	Afton Alps
Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol		Afton Alps
	Central Division First Runner-Up Large Alpine Patrol	
Outstanding Nordic Patrol		Hiawatha Nordic
	Central Division Outstanding Nordic Patrol	

NATIONAL APPOINTMENT

Danny Kenning #10978	Powder Ridge
Walt Krapohl #10980	Hiawatha Nordic, Welch Village & American Birkebeiner Race Patrol
Bruce Carlson #10982	Afton Alps

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Tom Gray Spirit Mountain





Double Black Diamond Editorial Page

The Helmet Controversy: To wear a helmet, or not?

The following articles are personal opinions and do not represent the position of the National Ski Patrol or the Western Region, Central Division, of the National Ski Patrol.



Chip Kurt, Patrol Director, Welch Village

chip@wvskipatrol.org

To wear a helmet while skiing or not?

To wear a helmet while skiing, or not? Certainly a personal decision, or is it? Few would argue that you are better protected from a slew of injuries when wearing a helmet, and a growing segment of the skiing / boarding population

adopts this piece of equipment each year. However, there is not a law (as with seat belts and child car seats) requiring a snow sport participant to wear one. Given that this is the land of personal liberty, this is the rule of law as it exists today.

There are, however, a host of exceptions to this rule. If you are a racer, a helmet is required. If you're a Boy Scout, a helmet is required. If you are enrolled in lessons at many areas, a helmet is required. If you are a part of many ski clubs and school groups, or if you plan to use the terrain park, a helmet is required.

The question before us: does being a member of the National Ski Patrol, while working a duty shift, constitute another exception to this rule. My answer to this: *yes!*

There are several reasons for this position:

First: We're in the business of promoting safety. A great deal of credibility is lost with those kids in the terrain park if you're standing there in your 'Steamboat' baseball cap. Modeling the way is an important part of our job. A helmet adds more legitimacy to that goal than any other piece of equipment we use.

Second: It's the right thing to do. We all know someone who has crashed in the last few years that would have been more seriously injured without a helmet than with one. All the groups I listed as exceptions earlier evaluated the pro's and con's of helmet use. It seems odd that we (who are tasked with ensuring the public safety) would somehow find reasons NOT to wear helmets, while many of our customers found reasons TO wear them.

Now, can we actually require patrollers to wear a helmet while on duty, without bringing civil liberties into question? Of course we can. The helmet becomes:

-A *uniform requirement*. The helmet joins our red coat, black pants and belt or vest for supplies that we require every patroller to wear currently. Or, the helmet is:

-*Required equipment*, similar to steel toed shoes, hard hats and eye protection required in many other occupations.

Then, the argument becomes: "We're volunteers! You can't make us!" To that, I again say, of course we can. NSP is a volunteer organization. This means we are not paid directly for our services. NSP can, however, set certain requirements for participation (like wearing a red coat, or completing annual training). The simple fact is, you accept the requirements as a condition of participation. Volunteer firemen are required to wear helmets and turnout gear. If you don't want to wear that equipment, you don't have to be a fireman. Likewise, wearing a helmet and red coat are conditions of being a ski patroller. You can ski all you want without a helmet – when you are NOT on duty. That's your choice, just as it should be.

My personal opinion: Wearing a helmet on duty promotes safety, and protects YOU. I can't think of two better reasons for mandated helmet use, while skiing your duty shift.



From the Jackson Hole News and Guide: "The Wyoming Department of Employment has cited Jackson Hole Mountain Resort for failing to protect ski patroller Kathryn Miller with a helmet when she died in a fall last winter."

"Miller died of head injuries after falling in Space walk Couloir, a steep rock-sided chute at the resort's Rendezvous Mountain permit area in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The resort does not require its patrollers or other ski workers to wear helmets."

"Following an investigation into her death by the state occupational safety and health branch of the employment department, the agency cited the company for: not ensuring the use of head protection to help prevent or reduce the severity of head injuries." Jackson Hole Mountain Resort continues to "encourage staff and guests to educate themselves on the use of helmets" and has appealed the decision.

The following is an editorial article, originally appearing in the *Final Sweep Newsletter*, August 2009 and does not reflect the position of the National Ski Patrol organization.

Helmet use by the skier should be a personal decision, Kevin Pusey

J.D. Danni, OSHA Program Manager
Wyoming Department of Employment
Cheyenne Business Center
1510 E. Pershing Blvd., West Wing
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7786

July 27, 2009

Dear Sir:

I am writing in support of the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's decision to appeal your citation against them regarding the March 13th, 2009 incident with Ski Patroller Kathryn Miller. I support JHMR's policy "to encourage employees to investigate the potential benefits of helmets", but not require employees to wear them. Helmet use while skiing, whether it is during working hours, or not, should be a personal decision by the skier. Most of us skiers regard this as a personal freedom, and can recognize when it is appropriate, or not, to wear a helmet while skiing. I have personally seen how a skier wearing a helmet creates a false security to themselves, encourages themselves to go faster; use less caution; are unable to hear clearly, all of which can result in unsafe situations. While I do support adults encouraging children to wear helmets while skiing for whatever reasons, and realize that helmet use while skiing has saved some lives, every ski accident is "situational". Being a very close friend of Kathryn's, and a co-worker, I personally know that she opposed wearing a helmet while skiing, even though she was well aware of the objective hazards of skiing. She felt it was up to the skier to make responsible decisions, ski in control, and know when to wear a helmet, or not, in the mountains. I feel that I need to stand up for her personal decision while she is unable to be with us anymore.

Also, while visiting her in the hospital, and talking with the medical staff there, I inquired "what if" she were wearing a helmet during her accident, and I was told "it wouldn't have mattered due to the severe mechanism of injury", and the impact of tumbling down a long, steep slope. This further supports her personal decision, and the 2008 study by J. Shealy, R. Johnson and C. Ettlinger titled "Do Helmets Reduce Fatalities or merely Alter the Patterns of Death?" that there is "no significant effect...for the more serious head



injuries such as concussions more severe than mild, closed head injury, skull fracture and death due to head injury." It is so unfortunate that you have issued this citation, and bring back incredibly painful memories of the loss of this wonderful woman. Being the extremely private person that she was, she never would have approved of being caught in the middle of your decision to cite the JHMR for "not ensuring the use of head protection to help prevent or reduce the severity of head injuries." Helmet use by the skier should be a personal decision.

Sincerely,
Kevin J Pusey
PO Box 3445
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

Finally, The Jackson Hole News and Guide reports:
"There have been changes in the months since Kathryn Miller's death. In April 2009, Vail resorts announced it would make helmets mandatory for all employees skiing or riding on the job beginning with the 2009-2010 season. The policy will be in place at all five of the company's resorts: Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone and Heavenly.
The policy also requires children ages 12 and under, who participate in a group lesson to wear a helmet."



Additional Information about helmet use:

In the *Journal of ASTM International* article: "Do Helmets Reduce Fatalities or Merely Alter the Patterns of Death?" Jasper "Jake" Shealy states: "The use of helmets has been proposed as a means of reducing the incidence of fatality in skiing and snowboarding. While helmets may be effective at preventing minor injuries, they have not been shown to reduce the overall incidence of fatality in skiing and snowboarding even though as many as 40% of the population at risk are currently using helmets. The results indicate that the use of a helmet will indeed influence the primary cause of death, but perhaps not the ultimate outcome."

In *RIT News and Events*, Shealy's research also revealed: "If the accident involves a skier or snowboarder traveling at average or above average speeds, and they experience a direct impact with a fixed object such as a tree trunk, the outcome is likely the same-death-regardless of the use of a helmet."

From the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) Helmet Usage 2008-09 National Demographic Study Fact Sheet:

48% of U.S. skiers and boarders overall wear helmets, up from 43% from the year before
77% of children 9 years and younger wear helmets
66% of children between ages 10-14 wear helmets
63% of adults over the age of 65 wear helmets

Notably, helmet usage increases with the skier's ability level. 26% of beginners wear helmets, 38% of intermediates wear helmets, while 55% of advanced skiers and riders wear helmets.

The NSAA will be launching a new initiative for the 2009-2010 season, designed to encourage all kids 14 and under to wear helmets. The goal is "near-universal" helmet usage for all children by 2012.

The Helmet Decision: To wear a helmet, or not?



Thanks to Sue Hayes for Slope Seasoning:

- Ski Season is here! You can perform the following list of exercises to get prepared for the fun!
16. Visit your local butcher and pay \$30 to sit in the walk-in freezer for a half an hour. Afterwards, burn two \$50 dollar bills to warm up.
 15. Soak your gloves and store them in the freezer after every use.
 14. Fasten a small, wide rubber band around the top half of your head before you go to bed each night.
 13. If you wear glasses, begin wearing them with glue smeared on the lenses.
 12. Throw away a hundred dollar bill now.
 11. Find the nearest ice rink and walk across the ice 20 times in your ski boots carrying two pairs of skis, accessory bag and poles. Pretend you are looking for your car. Sporadically drop things.
 10. Place a small but angular pebble in your shoes, line them with crushed ice and then tighten a C-clamp around your toes.
 9. Buy a new pair of gloves and immediately throw one away.
 8. Secure your ankles to a bed post and ask a friend to run into you at high speed.
 7. Go to McDonald's and insist on paying \$8.50 for a hamburger. Be sure you are in the longest line.
 6. Clip a lift ticket to the zipper of your jacket and ride a motorcycle fast enough to make the ticket lacerate your face.
 5. Drive slowly for five hours-anywhere- as long as it's in a snowstorm and you're following an 18 wheeler.
 4. Fill a blender with ice, hit the pulse button and let the spray blast your face. Leave the ice on your face until it melts. Let it drip on your clothes.
 3. Dress up in as many clothes as you can and then proceed to take them off because you have to go to the bathroom.
 2. Slam your thumb in a car door. Don't go see a doctor.
 1. Repeat all of the above every Saturday and Sunday until it's time for the real thing!



Final Sweep

Life's most persistent and urgent question is: "What are you doing for others?"
M.L.King, Jr

The Double Black Diamond Express is published biannually by the Western Region, Central Division of the National Ski Patrol.

Deadline for Spring 2010 Newsletter Submissions: 4/1/10

Address Changes can be updated on the NSP National Web Site. Please log on to www.nsp.org and access your NSP member page to update your personal information. The NSPWR Newsletter mailing list is downloaded from the National database.

Remember the NSPWR calendar at:

http://www.d.umn.edu/~nspscdwr/calendar2009_2010.php

