



Pre-season: October, 2006 Volume 1

Off Season Training

At first glance, this picture is of a helicopter being dwarfed by the surrounding craggy Grand Teton landscape; upon closer inspection, one notices the nearly microscopic speck dangling about a hundred feet below the chopper. If you were to closer examine that small dot, you would realize that the scene is not a pretty vista at all but actually the frightening rescue of former University of Wyoming nordic racer and current USCSA nordic student representative, Ava Bell.

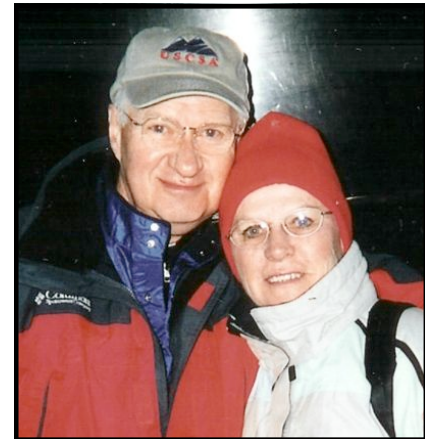
Seeking outdoor adventure in the summer-

time, Ava spent a week backpacking with a group of four friends prior to arriving in Jackson Hole, Wyoming to continue her journey by kayaking and climbing. On the day of the accident, the group decided to attempt a multi-pitch climb in Garnet Canyon: 3000 feet in elevation and approximately five miles in length. According to Ava, the group made good time to the summit, "We got up there around two, and there was only one last part of the scramble that was a bit more technical up a boulder field." It was this more difficult section that would

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Ava Bell, in flight, over the Grand Tetons



Bill and Norma Hetrick Ride the Snowbird Tram

Getting to Know You: An Insider's Look at USCSA's Insiders

Just because you commenced skiing at a resort that more likely resembles a sand dune, does not mean that you can't reach loftier heights; USCSA's own, Bill Hetrick, is living proof of the ascent that one can make in collegiate racing. Currently a member of the Board of Directors as Coordinator of the Allegheny Conference, Bill also serves on the Executive Board as the organization's Immediate Past President; however, Bill has not always possessed such impressive titles. It was a love for the outdoors and winter weather (passions that we all possess as snow-sport enthusiasts) that stirred Bill and his wife to start skiing at the di

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Ava's Race for Recovery

Serving USCSA for More Than a Decade

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ultimately be the beginning of a long, frightening experience for Ava. Losing her balance, she initially slipped and plummeted for twenty feet, only to continue descending an additional eighty feet, landing squarely on her back. Fortunately for her, the one piece of gear that she carried that day, a bag of rope slung on her back, broke the fall and ultimately saved her life. Once she finally landed, Ava assessed her injuries and immediately knew, at the very least, her ribs were broken.

Regardless of her exact injuries, help was urgently needed, but would not arrive for another two hours by foot and a total of three hours by air. To alert the authorities of



Ava Bell, Nordic Racing for University of Wyoming

Ava's fall, one of her friends

had to race the entire way

back down the mountain that they had spent the day ascending. While awaiting the arrival of the forest rangers, Ava's roommate (who possessed a Wilderness First Responder certification), tried to make her friend comfortable. This was a difficult feat as Ava did not lose consciousness through the entirety of the ordeal. An hour after the forest rangers arrived, the air-lift hovered over the location of the accident. The spot was far too rocky to land, so Ava was harnessed to a one hundred foot long rope that would lift her injured body off the peak. Once over an open field, the helicopter set her down again in order to properly convey her to the hospital.

The extent of Ava's injuries is astounding. Completely alert for three hours before assistance arrived, Ava endured more injuries in her fall than many people will know in a lifetime: "I broke my pelvis in 3 places, broke 6 ribs, suffered from a punctured lung, a broken

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minutive resort, Skimont, in his hometown of State College, Pennsylvania. What started as a pastime quickly turned into an occupation as both Bill and his wife, Norma, progressed to the largest area in Pennsylvania—Blue Knob at a towering 1072 vertical feet—and became certified instructors. Bill became involved with USCSA as a Conference Coordinator in 1995, and the rest, shall we say, has been downhill.

When asked why he has devoted so many years of his life to this ever-growing organization, Bill replied, "My wife and I love the experience of working with college-aged student-athletes. The challenges are many, but so are the rewards. It is very satisfying to have worked with the same people from freshman to senior year, and observed and experienced the growth in maturity, self-confidence, and leadership skills. In addition (and it's not the least of the rewards) – it keeps us young and keeps us on the slopes!"

Over the past eleven years, Bill has had the op-

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Ava's Race for Recovery

Serving USCSA for More Than a Decade

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finger, and numerous cuts and bruises." She had only been partly accurate in her

initial assessment of the damage to her body. While reaching medical attention was harrowing, the journey to recovery would be just as hard and many months long.

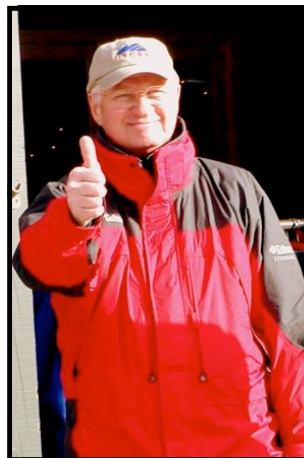
A six hour drive away from her home of Laramie, Wyoming, Ava spent one week at St. John's Hospital in the Intensive Care Unit, and three weeks in extended care, which she describes as "literally an old folks home." Of the twenty-eight days that Ava spent removed from her home, in the care of the hospital, and amidst the elderly, there were only four days that she didn't have a visitor. She attributes much of this support system to nordic skiing: "Because of the ski team, I know people all over the state! My ski team sent me a box so full the nurse couldn't lift it! It was filled with stuff to keep me occupied—my ski team has been wonderful."

Once she was discharged from the hospital, Ava endured the car ride home, only to face further challenges. Confined to a wheelchair, she finds getting around her house very difficult and is frustrated at missing all of her summer and

fall training. Her pelvis is still non-weight-bearing meaning that even when out of the wheelchair, she requires the assistance of a walker or crutches.

Despite all of the struggle and hardship, Ava's outlook is still surprisingly positive. When asked how she felt about the whole experience she casually responds, "Stuff happens, you know. Besides, this was the perfect time for this to happen because my plans to go to Honduras fell through, so now I am just looking for jobs to save up to go to Honduras then to law school."

It is difficult to believe that a "perfect time" exists for such a horrible accident, but her attitude, at least, is indicative of that of a true competitor on her way to a perfect recovery. Ava won't be completely healthy until February, but she has overcome the largest obstacles along the path so far. So this winter, while you compete and enjoy the strength beneath your feet--nordic, alpine, and snowboarding alike--appreciate how lucky you are to have that mobility, and know that there is someone desper-



Bill Offers a Thumbs-up to USCSA

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portunity to witness various changes in the organization and attributes these strides to "more knowledgeable and involved individuals on the Board of Directors and on the various committees. Also, the student involvement on the Board and the committees has expanded greatly, and has been very important in our positive development." The same student participation that Bill pins at the heart of the organization's progress over the last decade, he also promotes for the success of the coming years. He suggests that USCSA's longevity can be ensured by students at the team level "being ambassadors at their institutions to sell our sport and to assist in develop-

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ing and supporting their team.” Bill recommends a few critical actions that students must take to engender continued team and organization growth, “Particularly at schools where the team is a club sport, develop a close relationship with the administration to foster support. Work to have [an] appointed team coach/advisor to assure that there is continuity from year-to-year, and [see] that the team grows and prospers through team alumni support.”

Even though Bill’s involvement with USCSA forces him to consider such nasty fundamentals as funding, scheduling, logistics, and paperwork, he still knows all too well why it is worth doing. He also maintains a positive outlook in the face of the potential obstacles that the organization faces, “I truly believe that USCSA is beginning to be more visible to the ski/snowboard racing community, and our image is slowly but surely improving.” Even if his optimism ever wavered, it would be easy to locate Bill at a place where he could regain his confidence in the sport: “Standing at the top of Mineral Basin at Snowbird after a 20” snowfall of fresh Utah powder, ready to absorb the exhilaration and sheer ecstasy of the experience.” Once all of the USSA forms have been collected, the dues have been paid, and the last gate has been pulled from the side of the hill, it is that feeling of exhilaration from the experience that remains; after all, according to Bill, “That’s why we do this!”

* Betsy Pantazelos

Coaches’ Poll 2006

Based upon last season’s results, the promise of the upcoming season’s new skiers, and some good old fashioned coaching intuition, the predictions are in...

Alpine, Women

1. Sierra Nevada College
2. Boston College
3. Rocky Mt. College
4. Plymouth State Univ.
5. Colby-Sawyer College
6. Brown University
7. Univ. of Mass., Amherst
8. Albertson College
9. Univ. British Columbia
10. St. Olaf College

Alpine, Men

1. Sierra Nevada College
2. Rocky Mt. College
3. Plymouth State Univ.
4. Colby-Sawyer College
5. Boston College
6. Univ. of Mass. Amherst
7. Univ. British Columbia
8. St. Olaf College
9. Albertson College
10. Babson College

Nordic, Women

1. St. Olaf College
2. Clarkson Univ.
3. Univ. of Wyoming
4. Cornell Univ.
5. Univ. of Maine-Presque Isle

Nordic, Men

1. Cornell Univ.
2. Clarkson Univ.
3. Univ. of Wyoming
4. St. Olaf College
5. US Military Academy

Snowboarding, Women

1. Appalachian State Univ.
2. Weber State
3. Univ. of Idaho
4. East Carolina Univ.
5. Whitman College

Snowboarding, Men

1. Univ. of Idaho
2. Albertson College
3. Sierra Nevada College
4. Appalachian State Univ.
5. California State, Long Beach



USCSA Joins Forces with USASA

The United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) has teamed up with the United States of America Snowboard Association (USASA) to host team oriented, collegiate, snowboard competitions nationwide.

The USCSA is excited to begin a new relationship with the largest and most successful grassroots snowboard organization in the country. USCSA will have five new, regional, collegiate series within the USASA structure. USCSA events will run in conjunction with established USASA events, where available, or new stand-alone competitions will be created where needed. USASA competitions will be open to all USCSA competitors, provided they meet USCSA eligibility requirements and are registered members of the USASA. Teams and individuals competing in USCSA events will be members through their institutions. Please visit www.uscsa.com for more information related to university, team, and individual membership registration.

All events will be run under current USASA rules and guidelines. Team competition will be scored using USCSA rules. Teams and individuals will qualify for USCSA regional championships by competing in regular season events. Regional championships will

qualify riders for the showcase event in college ski and snowboard competition, the United States Skiing & Snowboarding National Championships which consists of Slopestyle, Halfpipe, Boardercross®, and Giant Slalom events.

The United States Collegiate Ski & Snowboard Association is the sports federation for collegiate team ski racing and snowboarding in America. Membership in the USCSA is in excess of 150 colleges from coast to coast, fielding some 3,800 men and women, alpine, cross country and snowboarding athletes in over 200 race events annually. The United States of America Snowboard Association is the governing body for competitive grassroots snowboarding and represents both the recreational and competitive interests of amateur snowboarding in the United States. Their goal is to promote safe, fair and fun events while fostering a competitive spirit in snowboard athletes.

* Laura Sullivan



CONTESTS

1. Submit a picture along with a short anecdote (less than 500 words) about your favorite USCSA experience. The top piece will be published in the next Racer's Rag (and will gain your team a little publicity!).

2. Submit a new slogan for USCSA to have it considered for the organization!

All submissions can be e-mailed newsletter@uscsa.com with "Racer's Rag Contest" in the subject line.

