

DOWNHILL



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Ohio Region Newsletter, National Ski Patrol System, Inc.

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From the top.....by Jim Woodrum

This season came and went in what seems, at the blink of an eye. As most areas didn't really get going until after Christmas and most closed in the first or second week of March. We only got about 10 to 12 weeks of skiing. However, we all crammed in a tremendous amount of activity within just a few short weeks. We still got in the senior clinics, MTR, skier enhancement seminars, Nordic enhancement seminars, Women for Women Patrollers Clinic, certified exams, PSIA Level I, II, & III clinics and exams, sssshuuu and the list goes on! A big huge THANK YOU to all the clinicians, instructors and examiners for an Outstanding job this short but effective season! I also extend this appreciation to all the Region Officers, Advisors, Patroller Representatives and the local advisors for another Outstanding Year in the Ohio Region.

The Region Meeting and Awards Banquet will be held this year at Alpine Valley on May 4. Please see the registration materials deeper in the newsletter. It will be an informative meeting with reports from all the advisors and officers and a wonderful time to eat, drink, and recognize the outstanding efforts of our fellow patrollers at the Awards Banquet.

Recently you may have noticed that the Ohio Region is hosting the Central Division meetings and Awards Banquet in September. Maybe you didn't notice but you now know. Anyway the theme for this year's meeting is "Pride in Patrolling". This certainly has been a year when many of us have reclaimed our "Pride in America". After the horrific

tragedy of Sept. 11 and the pride in our fellow Americans in the Winter Olympics, our patriotism hasn't been higher in recent history. Some of our comrades have participated in Ground Zero efforts while others supported the Winter Olympics. The Ohio Region is very proud of each patroller who served in these efforts. Thanks for stepping forward and taking part in these major events! Each of us can continue to show our pride by participating in the Region and/or the Division meetings and Awards Banquet. There will be lots to learn at both events and plenty of stories to add to our memory book about the Pride each of us have in being Patrollers in the NSP!

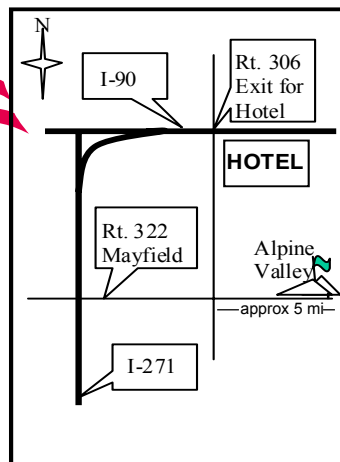
I hope to see many of you in these future meetings where we can talk about another great season or share where we want to go over the next few years. I will be in Central Division meetings in early April and hopefully I'll have more news to report about concerning the National Agenda. Probably the biggest area to report on is the G-1 Committee activities on the future organization of the NSP. Others will be reporting in the Rusty Parka News and be available to discuss this at the Division meetings in the Fall. Hope to see you there!

Thanks for another great season in Ohio and have a great summer!

Jim



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OHIO REGION SPRING MEETING BANQUET & AWARDS CEREMONY

Saturday, May 4, 2002
Alpine Valley Ski Area

9:00 AM	Region Meeting - Main Lodge, First Floor Green Room Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be Served
6:00 PM	Cocktails
6:30 PM	Banquet - Prime Rib or Matinated Chicken Breast or Vegetarian Salad, Vegetable, Rolls \$20.00 per Person - Reservation Required
After Dinner	Region Awards Ceremony

More Information and Reservation Form on back cover

2002 Ohio Region Calendar

April 2002

- 1 OEC Course Starts - Alpine Valley
- 7 Level 1 Avalanche - Snow Trails - Dale Grugle
- 13 Instructor Development (Phase 1) - PNS - Ed Humphrey
- 20 Section O4 Awards Banquet - Alpine Valley
- 20 PNS Patrol Banquet - 5 PM at PNS
- 20 Election Ballots due for Region Dir and Sec Chief O-3
- 21 or 28 Spring Fling - Clearfork

May 2002

- 5 **Region Meeting and Awards Banquet, Alpine Valley**
- 15 DOWNHILL v 29.4 (June issue) Deadline -
- 18 Rehab Cook Off, Snow Trails

June 2002

- 1 Division OEC IT Meeting - Minneapolis, MN
- 1 OEC Course Final - Alpine Valley
- 20-24 NSP National Conference - Garmish Germany

July 2002

- 27 MRM Golf Outing - John Norris (614) 272-8800

August 2002

- 10 Med Center Picnic - Snow Trails

September 2002

- 12-14 **Central Division Fall Meeting & Awards Banquet - Dublin Ohio** - Don & Cathleen Phipps - *Mark your calendar! Contact Don or Cathleen Phipps (937) 593-9527 for questions or to volunteer!*
- 22 **Region Fall Meeting**

October 2002

- 5 OEC Refresher & Chair Evac - Alpine Valley
- 19-20 Open House & Ski Swap - Alpine Valley

November 2002

- 4-7 Preseason Duty Week - Alpine Valley
- 8 Preseason Patrol Party - Alpine Valley

Patrol Representatives and Region Advisors - Please have your next season calendar events (refresher and course dates) ready for the May 4 Region Meeting

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Patrol & Section News

SECTION O-1

BUCKEYE NORDICS

In spite of the lack of any local natural snow, our patrollers got nearly two weeks of wonderful snow for cross country skiing by going on local XC club trips to Michigan and Silver Star in British Columbia. And the entire patrol participated in the Nordic Ski Enhancement Seminar held in February thanks to PNS area management, Mike Bell and Carl Hilker. Most BN patrollers also schedule a regular shift at PNS. Next season will be better, we hope!

Barbara Hartman - nordicpilgrim@mac.com - BN PR

MAD RIVER MOUNTAIN

Although this ski season ended up being short, the skiing was great. Investments in more snowmaking and expanded skiing area turned out well for Mad River Mountain.

Mad River kicked off its season the day after Christmas. The area saw a tremendous amount of skier days, breaking records during the first 3 weeks of operation. Total number of ski days reached 75.

Our annual swap turned out to be a winner again this year. We had a 14% increase in sales. Once again the MRM Ski Area and Central Ohio Ski Shops were key contributors to this event. The funds came in handy with equipment and training needs this season.

MRM Ski Patrol welcomes 7 new basics to our ranks. Robin Bently and Shawn Roush (Snowboard) completed their Senior requirements this year. Eight of our S&T Instructors became PSIA Level 1 certified and one is AASI Level 1 certified. Special congrats goes to Roger Patterson for passing the AASI Level 2 exam.

The 3 MRM patrollers that helped at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City had a tremendous experience. John Holt, John Norris, and Kent Oliver covered the downhill events. Their experience has



been chronicled at http://www.ohiohills.com/kent_oliver/

Our second year with the Junior Patroller program was a success. The program has been well received by the patrollers and ski area management. We've worked hard to get parent patrollers and sponsors to be more involved with the program by assigning them to teach Junior Patrol seminars. Our challenge for next year will be to continue involving more patrollers and finding ways allow non-patroller children to participate in the program.

The 2002/2003 'pre-season' activities include kicking off our next candidate class on March 20th. We also hosted a snow travel/self arrest clinic in March and have a golf outing planned for July 27th. Those interested in the golf outing should contact John Norris at 614.272.8800.

Chris Raudabaugh - MRM Patrol Representative

Patrol & Section News

SECTION O-3

I would like to thank both area's for a GREAT ski season. It was a pleasure working with everyone.

Dick James O-3 Section Chief



CLEARFORK Hey CF Patrollers; Well here we are...at the end of a short (74 day) season!! We had some VERY nice days and some... not so nice days, but that is SKI OHIO!!

We gained three new basic patrollers; Rick Armstrong, Blair Schwartz, and Lynn Rapp, congratulations to them. We also have two very good K2's, Byran Cole and Curt Mullany, coming along and the prospect of 4 or 5 K1's for next year. I'd like to thank all for doing a very good job, with special thanks to "Captain Kathy" and all her people who helped with the Winterfeast, Ken Radke for his help with the K1's & K2's. and Dick James, Section Chief, for keeping the business of the patrol running smooth. Look for a mailing for the "Spring Fling" we're thinking it will be the 21st or 28th of April.

Mark Reisdorf, PR Clearfork

Snow Trails



Congratulations to our new Seniors: Alpine Senior, Diane Hershner and Nordic Senior, Jenny Chesrown. Congratulations to our 5 new Basics, Dave Baumlein, Sue Cline, Ben Daniel, Jim Howe and John Vining.

Snow Trails SP new officers starting June 1: PR, Scott Kinnamon, email address, NSKSKI@aol.com, 173 Otterbein Drive,

Lexington OH 44904, home number, 419-884-6233.: APDs Jim Crowl and Bill Harkins. Deb Rhind is an APD held over from this year. Treasurer, Doris Noe, CO-Senior Advisors, Jim Crowl, 419-886-2342, Skydive515@aol.com, and Diane Hershner, contact Diane, 419-884-0259, djhershner@aol.com, about your senior electives and the paper work. Newsletter Publisher: Sharon Pinka, 419-938-8040, spinka@bright.net.

Snow Trails opened Dec. 26 and held its season end patrol party Saturday, March 23, 2002.

Info about the Level 1 Avalanche Course to be held at Snow Trails, April 7, 2002, 8am-5pm. Let Doris Noe, doranoe@aol.com, or Dale Grugle know if you are coming. You can register that day. Fee: patrollers \$25, non-patrollers \$35. Bring lunch and outdoor clothes for the afternoon session. More information; contact Dale Grugle, 440-248-8223, dalegrugl@aol.com.

Summer events:

Rehab Cook Off, May 18, 2002, at Snow Trails. Med Central Picnic, August 10, 2002. We still need more folks to help with that.

Doris Noe, PR - Snow Trails Ski Patrol

SECTION O-4

The winter of 2001-2002 can be summed up in one word, WEIRD. Even though it as the warmest winter on record, section O-4's Big Creek and Alpine Valley Ski Areas had a good year because of snowmaking and grooming improvements made last summer.

The Ohio Nordic Patrol did a lot of training done in spite of the lack of natural snow. Local alpine ski area managers allowed Nordic patrollers to train weekly and keep their skiing and OEC skills sharp.

Section O-4 will hold its local awards banquet at Alpine Valley on April 20, 2002. On May 4th, Alpine Valley Patrol will host the Ohio

Region Awards Banquet. Bring your family and stay the weekend. There is much to do.

- **Watch a Cleveland Indians Baseball game.* Yes, our ever-exciting Central Division Champs, The Cleveland Indians, host the Texas Rangers that weekend. Call 1-866-48TRIBE or purchase tickets or log onto: www.indians.com for more info.

- **Visit the Great Lakes Science Center/I MAX Theater.* Sail across the Atlantic on the worlds largest and safest ship, The Titanic. (After your tour find out if you sank with the ship or survived.) A really exciting time, call 216-694-2000 for ticket info.

- **Visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.* See where it all began, right here in Cleveland, the Rock Capitol of the world. Call 1-888-764-7625 or log on: www.rockhall.com.

- **Bring your bikes and follow the Towpath* through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. For more info call 216-524-1497 or log on at www.nps.gov/cuva. Also the Metroparks have great hike/bike trials throughout the area.

There is just so much to do, you will need more time. But bring the group and have fun. Any questions, please contact me.

Bob Ayers - Section Chief O-4. Home # 216-531-5571 e-mail at: Mr208bob@aol.com.

Alpine Valley

The 2001/2002 season is now a memory. Making the most of winter and enjoying being out on the snow made the season slip by so quickly.

Alpine Valley's patrol membership has grown substantially over the last few years. With at least 8 or 9 candidates each year (15 in the 1999-2000 OEC class), we now register 75 patrollers and expect 4 to 5 in our next

OEC class starting April 1. Pretty good for a patrol our size! And our patrol is growing younger. Most new patrollers have young children who ski or snowboard regularly while their parents are patrolling. Congratulations to our 13 new patrollers at Alpine Valley, Pat Aquilla, Pat Barton, Lorie Berman, Ted Berman, Annemarie Cvijanovc, Julie Delpra, Christina Demarchi, Jason Jurek, Patty Mercuri, Karla Muehlhauser, Ken Pyles, Gretchen Wolf and Grant Yarolin

Last fall we ran our first ski swap. This fund raising venture was pretty much all new to us. There is always a bit if a learning curve when doing something new, and learn we did. Overall things went quite smoothly with only a few problems. We look forward to the challenges and reward of our next successful swap (Oct 19 & 20).

Alpine Valley Ski Area recently doubled it's water pumping capacity. I hear more snow making additions will be on tap next year. The purchase of two snow cats made short work keeping the area's nine runs in good shape all season, despite mother nature's unwillingness to give us the white stuff we all love. Hopefully she'll be a bit more cooperative next year. We can only hope!

See the region calendar for Alpine Valley's upcoming events.

Kurt Tenerove - Patrol Representative, Alpine Valley

Section 01 cont.

SkiPike - aka Spicy Run

If refinancing and reorganization efforts are successful, we will be able to ski the slopes of Spicy Run again under a new name "SkiPike".



SkiPike - aka Spicy Run - cont.

Ed Allshouse writes that progress on this effort can be viewed on a new website www.skipike.com/. Recently DOWNHILL visited the web site and found that the emphasis is raising the necessary financial support to restart the ski area. The organizers are looking for more investors. As of March 28 the final decision for the ski area name is yet to be made. The organizers are trying to obtain an indication of skier interest in SkiPike, by asking skiers to register when they visit their website.

Ed Allshouse - PR Spicy Run New telephone 740-360-6219.
New e-mail eallshou@columbus.rr.com

REGION ELECTIONS

Two region positions are up for election this year, Section Chief 0-3 and Region Director. Information regarding eligibility requirements and nomination procedure are outlined in Winter issue of the *RUSTY PARKA NEWS*. The Region Director election is handled by the Division Elections Coordinator, Gary Bizjack.

Deadline for nominations for Section Chief was March 20, 2002. Incumbent, Dick James, is running for a second term. Patrol Representatives and Section Chief are eligible to vote.

Nancy Kohrieser - **Region Elections Officer**

SNOWBOARDING

WOW!! Did we have a great season of snowboarding fun and good times? Yes!! In several Ohio and Michigan snowboarding clinics this year we learned more about snowboarding than we thought possible. As snowboarding grows we'll need more NSP member riders. NSP members enjoy the outdoors and new challenges. Why did I start to board? Because it was new, untried challenge and as I looked around, I found myself saying "I CAN DO THAT. Maybe not too good at first, but I will get better." It does get better. I would like to invite the *skiing* NSP members to try *snowboarding* and feel the thrill of a new wide-open road again.

Let's hit the highlights of 2001/2002 season. We added another Senior NSP Snowboard member to our Region. Several Snowboard Clinics were held throughout the Ohio Region. Bob Goode, our Division's Snowboard Advisor came to Ohio and helped with a clinic at Snow Trails. Also, since Perfect North Slopes opened their hill to snowboarders in February, you can 'board at all Ohio Region alpine areas! We have come a long way in the past few years.

The biggest thing I noticed, as I attend Snowboard PSIA/AASI clinics in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York, is PSIA and NSP starting to merge resources for the good of skiers and snowboarders. In our region, we are working with the new NSP-C PSIA School to develop an extensive NSP Snowboarding training standards. I want to operate future snowboard clinics with our new NSP-C PSIA School using PSIA standards and benefiting from PSIA/AASI documentation and styles.

Next season, I will continue holding clinics at Snow Trails/Mansfield every other Saturday starting the weekend after opening. Show up, have some fun and learn. All NSP members, beginners to advanced riders, are invited. Also, I will schedule Snowboard Clinics throughout Ohio Region in coordination with NSP-C PSIA School. I will publish these clinic dates in *DOWNHILL* and on the Region website www.ohionsp.org.

Thanks for the cooperation from the people who make the NSP what it is today.

Frank Ujvari - Ohio Region Snowboard Advisor

STAY CONNECTED

Thinking of hanging up the gold or white cross? Do you need to take some time off from patrolling for personal reasons? In either case consider keeping connected by joining the NSP alumni. As an alumni member there is no service commitment. You pay dues (\$27) directly to the national office. You receive your registration card, *Ski Patrol* magazine, the NSP Catalog, *Rusty Parka* Central Division newsletter and *DOWNHILL*. Some patrols will register alumni associates. If you are just taking a year or two off, try to set aside a day in your schedule to attend the OEC refresher. This way you will be up to date when you go back on active duty and no makeup OEC course will be necessary.

If you are not sure or have any questions feel free to contact me anytime. If I don't have the answers I will get them for you.

Brad Glass -
00108 US Rt. 33
St. Mary's OH 45885

Region Alumni Advisor
(419) 394-5071 (H)
(419) 394-4201 (W)

NATIONAL SKI PATROL ALUMNI APPLICATION

send info to: 133 s. Van Gordon Street, Suite 100, Lakewood, CO 80228
more information at Phone (303) 988-1111 and <http://www.nsp.org>

Name _____ Email _____
Address _____ Phone (____) _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Reregistering alumni members provide NSP registration number _____

NEW ALUMNI MEMBERS PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

Last NSP Affiliation Ski Patrol _____
NSP Registration Number _____
Region _____ Division _____ Last Yr. Registered _____

Alpine Nordic NSP Appointment Number _____

If you wish to associate with a ski patrol please provide that information here

Ohio Region Avalanche

LEVEL I COURSE: In December, I attended a Central Division Avalanche Meeting in Wisconsin. I learned about several changes to the Avalanche Program that have an effect on our Region. The Level I course has been changed to Level I Awareness and will be a 2 day course. More time will be spent in beacon searches, search and rescue on the second day. With these changes, Level I Awareness will qualify a patroller for the Level II course.

LEVEL II COURSE: The central division will conduct a Level II course in Utah next year. The 10 day course will be held sometime in March 2003. This class is open to the first 20 qualified patrollers that apply. It usually is already filled by September. Anyone interested in taking the Level II please contact me as soon as possible. I will have the exact dates posted on the Ohio Region Web as soon as I receive them. I have also been in contact with the Eastern Division Avalanche Advisor and he will be willing to take qualified Ohio Region Patrollers in their course (which runs 2 weekends in New York and New Hampshire).

AVALANCHE INSTRUCTORS: With the changes to the Avalanche Program, we are looking for anyone who would be interested in teaching Avalanche Level I. If you would be interested please contact me.

DALE N. GRUGLE -

Region Avalanche Advisor



THE OHIO REGION SKI SCHOOL

This year we focused on delivering the training and preparation for Instructor PSIA certification to the respective Ohio ski areas. We did this with a formal certification preparation course and in the form of cafeteria style training. I think we accomplished our task of imparting knowledge and information about the participants skiing but more importantly everyone had fun. I could tell from all the smiling. Next year we will again embark on this mission and we hope to see you.

So how are we doing? In the Central Division Ski School we have 104 members. Ohio Region has 66 of those members. Of our total membership 34 PSIA are certified. That's not bad! Congratulations are in order for our new Level II's: Orest Melnyk, John McGoff, Pete Oka, Bob Smith and Patty Johnson. It's always inspiring to see fellow patrollers reach for higher goals. Ask any ski instructor about certification and they'll all tell you that in spite of occasional setbacks the journey was fun and well worth it.

Next year we will endeavor to produce a program whereby we can join training resources with area ski schools to produce a better outcome for both parties. We will construct a program to train and develop level III instructors.

Remember, your skiing is a work in progress. You spend the money on those beautiful skis, bindings, clothes and trips. Spending a little time and money on the driver of those skis is a good investment. Let us help make you better.

Dale Mihuta, Co-director, Region Ski School

Mountain Travel and Rescue

What a year for the Mountain Travel & Rescue program! Not only have we had a great turnout for the Basic MTR course, but we have also had an Advanced MTR course that had as many people complete as we had on the Basic course. In addition to that we have had a few Extrication Clinics and have some others either planned or in the works, such as at the Central Division meeting in Dublin, Ohio this fall. We will also be working to certify about 8 new instructors across the region this year. A big thanks goes to all of these instructors for helping out this year: Ray Martodam, Sandra Stringer, Dave Barnes, Ron Gerdes, Frank Cleary, Dave Derbyshire, Max Davis, Barb Hartman, Caryl Bailey, Daryl Knauss, Kraig Johnson, Joann Chess, Dan Petersen, Mel Weisblatt, Jim Vickroy, and Jane Price.

The Basic MTR course was held on January 12-13 at Caesar Creek State Park. If there was ever a time to complete the field session, this was the weekend. It was sunny with mild temperatures and a group of people that just knew how to enjoy the outdoors. Darren Kaberna even showed how well he could cook a steak and potatoes on a campfire. The following people completed the Basic MTR course: Dan and Kurt Dickman, Darren Kaberna, Jason, Stelter, John Vining,

Dan Moss, Dave Zeager, Ron Gerdes, Yvette Forment, John Patrick, and Kim Hiser.

January 18 - 20 was another great weekend to hold an advanced MTR course which hasn't been offered inside the Ohio Region for years. Our weather ranged anywhere from about 0 to 20 degrees with a few inches of snow on our first night. We all slept in emergency shelters for two nights. Remember some of the best emergency shelters are made with natural materials like fallen trees or under evergreens. We rediscovered that cooler air sinks to the bottom of valleys causing those valleys to be considerably cooler than a little higher on the hill. Eleven patrollers complete the Advanced MTR course: Steve Barbour, Jenny Chesrown, Russ Conway, Sue Cline, Willie Medina, Karen Gardbury, Rick King, Kraig Johnson, Dan Moss, Dave Zeager, and Jon Bascom.

For those people that have stayed away from the Basic MTR course because they thought it was going to be too cold or were too busy during the season, we are considering holding next year's Basic MTR course before the snow comes down on the ski areas. Yes, we will also be holding another Advanced MTR course for those of you that were unable to attend this year but. If you are interested in either MTR course or in becoming an instructor, contact me at either 513-624-6308 or rkingpatroller@yahoo.com.

Rick King - Region MTR Advisor

First Nordic Ski Enhancement Seminar

A dozen Ohio Nordic skiers were tired but very pleased after attending the first Ohio Nordic Skiing Enhancement Seminar (NSES). They completed two days of intensive Nordic skiing lessons on classical-striding, skating and telemarking skiing. Mike Bell, a level III PSIA Nordic ski instructor, described, demonstrated and coached the group on step by step skills leading to the mastery of the three major Nordic skiing categories. He even added short sessions on waxing skis, essential backcountry skiing backpack contents, and sail skiing. More information was presented and skills demonstrated than anyone could completely take in, but everyone, from beginner to expert levels said they learned things that helped their Nordic and alpine skiing. And it was fun with good camaraderie all the way through. Without exception, all attendees hope for another NSES next year.

Perfect North Slopes hosted the seminar on February 9 and 10. It was a first Nordic seminar for this alpine ski area and for the NSP Ohio Region. Originally scheduled but then cancelled near Traverse City Michigan, the venue was transferred thanks to the efforts of Carl Hilker and the support of Mike Bell. Both are PSIA Nordic instructors and ski patrollers. Carl got permission for hosting the NSES from PNS management during the same weekend that PNS hosted the Senior Alpine Clinic (test). He purchased a set of Nordic track setting shoes and fabricated a track setter that could be towed behind a snowmobile. The track setter worked beautifully the first time and made possible the classic stride skiing lessons on a relatively flat area of alpine groomed snow. Carl also took care of the last minute publicity resulting in a class of about a dozen on both days. Carl and Mike supplied appropriate Nordic boots, bindings and skis for those needing the equipment.

Although the Central Division-NSP sponsored the NSES, non-ski patrollers were welcomed as participants. The entire four member Buckeye Nordic Ski Patrol participated (Carl Hilker, Barbara Hartman, John Malas and Max Davis), as well as patrollers Jennifer Chesrown from the Cuyahoga Nordics, Steve Barbour the Patrol

NORDIC SES - cont. Representative of Ohio Nordics and John Bascom, an alpine PNS patroller. Bill Talley and Tom Lorton and the entire Buckeye Nordic Patrol represented the Miami Valley Cross Country Ski Club. Other Nordic skiers from the Cincinnati area included Oky Gurel, Ray Bauer, and Albeer and Deepak Desai.



Mike Bell & Jennifer Chesrown

Jennifer Chesrown, a Cuyahoga Nordic patroller, completed her skiing, toboggan and belay and backcountry pack-check requirements for the Ski Patrol Nordic senior classification. She is the first Ohio Region Nordic to complete these requirements since 1993. Mike Bell a Central Division senior examiner, was assisted by the Ohio Region's Nordic Advisor, Barbara Hartman and Max Davis.

Our Olympic Dream started in 1975 - the National Ski Patrol held a two-week European Seminar with one week in Wengen, Switzerland and one week in Innsbruck, Austria. The World Cup was held in Innsbruck in preparation for the '76 Winter Games. When Frantz Klammer skied like a maniac on a gray ice surface to win first place the seed was planted. Joe and I planned to go to the 1980 the Olympics in Lake Placid - when would the Winter Games be in the U.S. again? A year in advance we had an invitation to stay in a room in a nearby farm house belonging to the parents of a friend. But their health problems intervened. We cancelled our plans and watched the Olympics on TV. My father's inheritance allowed our family to attend the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. As spectators we were impressed but only actually being there we discovered the Olympic spirit of hospitality and friendliness. Strangers riding the transportation system would turn to ask, "Where are you from?" "What events did you see today?" The entire train car even sang Happy Birthday when someone announced it was his friends' birthday today. It was incredible — the way the world should be!

When the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympic Games were announced, Joe and I looked at each other and grinned like idiots. Our dream began to sprout. So we are a LOT older than when our dream began, the idea had never gone away. We filed our applications after the *Ski Patroller Magazine* announced that Salt Lake Olympic Committee (SLOC) needed volunteers. I applied for medical services, Joe applied to work on the snow. The waiting began.

We were notified of other upcoming Utah events and it was suggested we volunteer for as many events as possible...as training. We had never skied in Utah when we scheduled a in February 2000 trip to Snowbasin. Joe volunteered a day or two at the end of our ski week. They had a snow drought and didn't have much work for him. We skied Alta instead. We drove by Snowbasin and found volunteers putting together B-nets (the red safety netting placed along the racecourse edges.) Joe helped them while I experimented with the fresh snow. The snow was wet and heavy and not much fun, so I quit skiing and helped string B-nets. They encouraged us to sign in and log our hours in the volunteer trailer before we left. We returned to Utah in February 2001 for the World Cup. Joe's worked on a Men's Course Crew. He went to the mountain at 6:00 am and shoveled snow to clear the course all day every day. Then the race didn't happen. I set up an interview with the Salt Lake Olympic Committee. They

said it would be October 2001 before those accepted would be notified. Soon after Joe worked for the World Cup, he received a letter stating that, if still interested, he would be a part of the 2002 Games. He had his foot in the door. In August 2001, we received a letter that we had passed our F.B.I. background check. I started re-reading my O.E.C. textbook and other medical books and articles on injuries and illnesses. Since the ski areas were all using their own local patrols to cover their mountains, I hoped for an assignment to a spectator first aid station. (Later I learned that more doctors, nurses, paramedics and EMTs volunteered for the Medical Services than were needed for all the first aid stations.) In early October I received my S.L.O.C. invitation a "slipper" on the Men's Downhill course. Joe told me what slippers were totally awesome skiers who held a wedge on super steep ice while skiing 30 or 40 mph around the few gates to erase the last racer's tracks quickly before the next racer comes down! I'm NOT an awesome skier! Then another letter came from Snowbasin saying I was to be a Course Crew Worker. We confirmed with Snowbasin that indeed my name was on their list as a Course Crew Worker. WHEW! I put my ER books away and started my diet and exercise program. My Course Crew Lead e-mailed introducing himself and all the other people on our team. With e-mail connections, the team to greeted each other and found out who had worked previous races and who were greenhorns, like me.

We arrived in SLC a couple days early so we could get familiar with the territory and acclimate ourselves to the 7000+ feet altitude. We picked up our uniforms, our Service training (3 hours) and our Venue Training (2 hours). I went to the apartment and put my name inside all the pieces of my uniform right away — so they couldn't take it back!

I vividly recall the first day...I had been so excited the night before that I woke up every hour on the hour...the alarm clock went off at 2:30 am I got up and my heart didn't slow down all day! We were on the shuttle bus at 4:45 am on our way to the mountain with all the other passengers wearing the same uniform. The first day was an early schedule and they intentionally kept it slow to kind of work the bugs out. (For example, when you schedule 800 workers to arrive at the parking lot at the same time, shouldn't you also schedule enough shuttle busses to transport them all up the mountain as well???) We went through airport-type security and got wanded every morning. (Why did the uniform designers use metal snaps, metal zipper pulls and metallic thread to set off the magnetometers?) Anyhow we had a light work schedule our first day out before we were released to free ski. These western skiers take the mountain from top to bottom non-stop, but my team waited at the bottom of the lift for me. My teammates were from Utah, California, Colorado, Arizona, British Columbia, Canada and of course me — a small-town Ohio girl from the mountains of Indiana! (I showed them I could ski, even though I was a flatlander.) I do remember thoroughly APPRECIATING the day — the sky was clear, the snow was marvelous, the scenery magnificent — a truly glorious day!!!

The other workdays kind of blur into each other. The team stayed together every day until released. We were a floating crew one day, putting up B-netting, side-stepping and side-slipping the Start of the Men's Downhill Course (72% grade with a "Zambonied" race surface). We might work at an assigned station (Bear Trap, for me). Sometimes we moved down the mountain stopping to ask the Section Leader what we could do to help on our way through. The object was to work in such a manner that we were efficient in our efforts and to not create more work for anyone else.



My team leader was positively THE best. He watched out for us, he took good care of us, was a great guy and fun to work with. We would go up on the chairlift at 6:30 am, get off and wait as a team to pass through Worker City to pick up our tools of the trade. We even had choices: Rake or shovel? Aluminum shovel or plastic? Long or short handled shovel? Then we would ski with our shovel, in the dark (!) down a cat-track to our station on the mountain, cross over the B-net, traverse across the racecourse surface (separate lines!), admire the sunrise and go to work. Our job was to move loose snow away from the injected-ice race surface. Someone, usually the Section Leader, would have crampons on and a rake. They would start at the middle of the iced surface and rake the loose snow to us. We would be lined up front to back and use our shovels to scoop the snow from the tip of our skis and toss it to the tail of our skis. (Imagine paddling a canoe while standing on skis.) The person behind us would scoop the snow farther back and so on back to the fencing or as far as the Section Leader deemed necessary. Then we would take a step downhill and scoop some more. The point was to use gravity to our advantage to move the snow and keep the surface smooth, not create holes, piles or walls, sort of similar to icing a cake...a very large cake! Sometimes we would sideslip snow down to a snow chute; sometimes we would just pack snow by sidestepping up and sideslip down the same area over and over. I was surprised by all the different ways I learned to move snow. (They did not want any mechanical grooming equipment on the course at this time - so we became the personal groomers or "snow-bonies".) We were extremely fortunate with our weather...there were 6 races and several training runs scheduled...it only snowed 3 inches one night out of the 12 days we were scheduled to work and we lost only one of the men's training runs because of it! One day we worked our way to the bottom-warming tent for our lunch break. It was 3:00 PM — It occurred to me as I was eating my lunch, that I had eaten my breakfast exactly 12 hours earlier that day!

Our team worked well together, we worked hard to get the job done in the most efficient way possible. We all helped each other. We were there for each other. If there weren't enough crampons (5 pairs) for everyone (7 team members) the other 2 kept themselves busy doing some other kind of snow moving to help the team. There were no complaints or whining or shirking duties! We are all in this together, we come on as a team and we leave as a team. As a result, we had a snow stadium to sit in to enjoy watching all the training runs and races on the men's course. And because we would work hard and nibble on snacks from our pockets; at our leader's suggestion we would take our "lunch break" about the time the women's training runs or races would start and we got to watch all of those as well. And then we would go back to work. (We also had two snow igloos

at our station, one labeled "men" and the other "women". The walls were about 7 feet high and by the end of the first couple of days they were complete with pine bough air freshener and hand sanitizer on the snow shelf. These special facilities were for liquid waste only. In an environment of "hydrate or die" it's important to find a balance.)

At the end of our day - whenever the job was completed - if there was time left that the lifts were still open and we got released, we could go free skiing. The volunteers worked hard and played hard. My favorite story is, a ski patrol saw 3 or 4 Olympic volunteer blue coats skiing too fast on an intermediate trail; but by the time the patroller caught up with them at the bottom of the lift, there was a sea of blue coats!

I suppose, being safety-minded individuals, some patrollers will ask, "Were there any injuries?" Yes, there were. An Olympic racer from Chile fell and broke his leg on the first day of training runs. Several volunteers got hurt, possibly a result of the long days/short nights (tiredness and forgetting to look uphill!) I heard about blown knees, sprained wrist and a bruised or cracked rib. Remember - our work situation was sometimes extremely dangerous. We saw cell phones, skis, radios, battery packs, backpacks, 3 gallon jug of water, rakes, shovels and an NBC cameraman all sliding downhill like unguided missiles on the icy race surface — no one laughed, next time it could be your turn!

Were there volunteers that were NOT able to do the jobs they were assigned? Absolutely. Snowbasin needed many more workers on the snow than they originally thought. On the day he was to pick up his uniform, a man decided his legs would not allow him to do his job. A lady was assigned a Section job couldn't handle the terrain, so she was reassigned a clean-up job at the base. A slipper who said his knees wouldn't last was reassigned to our team. Our assistant team leader was reassigned because they needed another runner. Some people just quit. Those that completed their assignments received a nice watch, a closing party, some new friends and wonderful memories.

I feel very fortunate to have been selected to serve as a volunteer for the Olympics. It was an incredible team experience for me. Would I do it again? Well, I do have some other life experiences I would also like to accomplish, but should the occasion arise I would say "yes" at a moment's notice! Would I recommend the Olympic experience to others? Only if you are willing to fully participate, and be willing to accept the responsibility, the honor and integrity that goes along with it. And I understand the 2006 Olympics are looking for volunteers..."

'Nita & Joe Gerstle -

PNS Ski Patrol

UPDATED REGION ORGANIZATION CHART - Very few changes have been made since the December issue. EdAllshouse and Barbara Harman have new email addresses - see their articles. A current organization chart is included in the website version of this issue at www.ohionsp.org

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revised April 1, 2002

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