

PSIA



AASI

NORTHERN INTERMOUNTAIN DIVISION
Professional Ski Instructors of America
American Association of Snowboard Instructors

WINTER NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2022

Northern Intermountain 1971-2021



Celebrating 50 Years



POMERELLE MOUNTAIN RESORT
IDAHO

50th Spring Symposium Event hosted by:

Pomerelle looks forward to Hosting Northern Mountain's 50th Anniversary

Hopefully we will be having the celebration this season as it was cancelled last spring because of Covid. Lee Leslie and Jim Stevens will be in charge of the event. They are working hard and donating a lot of time to make sure this event is fun and successful. *We are seeking names and addresses of some of the earliest members of the division. I'll be contacting some of you in the division for info on names and addresses. We are looking forward to this monumental event, April 1st-3rd, 2022.*

This past season at Pomerelle was one of the best ever. People were so tired of being confined because of Covid they couldn't wait to get outside to breathe fresh air and recreate. The snowsports school had one of the busiest seasons ever. We are looking at new programs for the upcoming season and we are excited to get started. We hope everyone in the Division has a safe and great season.

Hope to see you soon!
Barry Whiting, SnowSports Director
Pomerelle Mountain Resort

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Get your best game on, NI members, and celebrate 50 years of legacy!

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President's Message

Greetings fellow PSIA-AASI members and snowsports educators!

I hope you are finding success sliding on snow and connecting with colleagues and guests this season.

I have had a number of conversations about our organization and its structure with members recently, and feel it's important enough to share segments of what I've written in previous newsletters in the hopes to illuminate how YOUR association is organized.

Your PSIA-AASI Northern Intermountain Board of Directors is composed of 9 members. Directors are selected by majority vote in the Spring of every year to sit for 3-year terms. There is no member school affiliation requirement; all active members of NI, in good standing, may be eligible.

In June, your Board selects officers for 2-year terms, from its 9 directors, to assist in meeting our charge of stewarding the organization; those are the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

We have found great success in borrowing from our National affiliated partner, and utilizing a similar 6-committee structure. In this form, we engage our directors, who contribute their skills and strengths. Those committees are the Governance & Leadership Development Committee, Finance Committee, Membership Linkage Committee, Awards and Recognition Committee, Education Foundation Advisory Committee, and Executive Compensation Committee.

These committees meet regularly and the Board holds a call on the fourth Monday of every month to keep updated and vote on proposals brought forth by committee work. The Board also holds two larger meetings, open to all, as is the case with all of board meetings, in the Fall/Winter and Spring. Board meetings and calls have four major categories into which our activities fit: generative discussion, strategy, finance, operations update.

As a member of NI, **YOU** select the Board, the Board selects the Executive Director. The Executive Director is charged with ensuring your certification and education, and all the business that goes into making that happen.

The Board works closely with the Administrative staff to look up and out at the horizon of what this association can and ought to be. We strive to meet the needs you express as members and help you get value out of your membership.

The Board is busy and we volunteer our time to this work because we have received from this organization both personal and professional benefits, and we wish to ensure your gains as well. I thank you for the opportunity to serve.

More detail of this information can be found on our website: <https://www.psia-ni.org/download/PSIA-AASI-NI-Board-Governing-Policies-Manual-May-2020-.pdf>

**Warm regards and chilly mornings,
Christian Luening, PSIA-AASI-NI President, Bogus Basin**



NI News Cont'd

Executive Director Update Winter 2022

The 2021-22 season has been an interesting ride thus far. Similar to the 2020-21 season it has been inspiring to see so many people out enjoying snowsports on the mountains and the trails. The challenges faced by our schools, area operators, and just about everyone else with staffing have been considerable. Many of us have been moving from one role to another quite a few times each day to ensure that things run smoothly and that everyone has the best day possible. It has been exhausting and yet strangely invigorating. This update will go over our updated pricing and some changes to our staff and volunteer leadership.

Event Pricing:

Many of you have noticed that our clinic prices have gone up. Our base rate for a 6 CEU in-person clinic day was \$65 last season and is now \$90, or \$15 per CEU. The decision to increase our prices was not taken lightly and a number of factors were considered. These include covering our event expenses, reducing event cancellations, enhancing staff training, and inflation.

The single largest consideration was that our dues and investment income have been covering the shortfall between event income and expense for several years now. Our feeling is that event income should offset event expenses, including clinic leader wages, mileage, lodging, and per diem. As many of our clinic leaders deliver education for reasons other than the money, we believe that this should not be taken for granted and we work to pay a good daily rate and ensure that all expenses are covered. While it would be great if every education event's income could cover expenses, we recognize that to deliver the services our members expect we need to run some of our events at a loss. The increase in pricing offers us the ability to run events with smaller groups, thus reducing our rate of event cancellations and to carefully greenlight events that require additional travel and/or outside clinic leaders. We have invested in much more staff training this season and plan to continue to do so moving forward. Finally, the rise in cost of living and travel expenses has increased our mileage and lodging rates for our clinic leaders.

Looking around the country, our \$15/CEU rate is on the lower end of the spectrum. No one charges less than \$90 per 6 CEU day. Northwest is currently \$90 per 6 CEU day, West, Intermountain, and Northern Rocky Mountain are priced at \$95 per 6 CEU day and it goes up from there. Each of our regions has differing member needs and differing challenges in terms of expenses (for example, Central has a big lake cutting their already large geography in half), and the need to have income cover expenses is common across the country. Our math lines up with that of our neighbors.

Staff & Volunteer Leadership Updates:

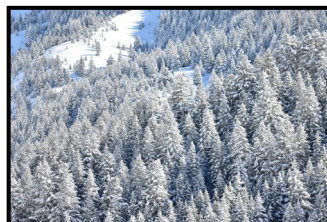
Taylor Caballero has taken on a broader role as Education Coordinator. She is working with Nick Treat and the Lakewood staff to create and administer education events. Her work is primarily in the alpine realm in conjunction with her role as Alpine Chair, though she assists in other discipline areas as needed. Taylor will also be assisting with the education content for the Spring Symposium/50th Anniversary celebration at Pomerelle in April.

On the Children's side, Martina Vala is taking on many of the duties of Jani Sutherland as interim Children's Chair. Jani is working closely with Martina to assist her in this work.

Please welcome Randy Wall as our new Telemark Chair. Randy is a longtime PSIA-AASI member who has served as a volunteer leader and Telemark chair in Western and NRM over the years. He has been in Boise for the past several years and is excited to be more involved and bring his experience to the organization. Randy is planning to create several Telemark options for the Spring Symposium/50th Anniversary celebration at Pomerelle.

Keep up the good work everyone and don't hesitate to reach out: broberts@psia-ni.org (208) 861-4383.

Thank you,
Ben Roberts, PSIA-AASI-NI Executive Director, Bogus Basin



PSIA-AASI NI

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NI News Cont'd

Alpine Level 2 and 3 Assessment Process Updates

The past several years, the various PSIA-AASI task forces have been working to update education and certification standards across all disciplines. This fall, we put these updates into place. With these updates came many changes to our regional process in order to align with the other seven regions. The ultimate goal of the updates we have made across the country and within Northern Intermountain are to encourage and support the growth of our membership as educators, with less emphasis on task completion and more emphasis on the whole instructor.

The big question people have been asking is: how does this change what we are looking for during the exam/assessment process? The answer is this: ultimately, it doesn't. What we are looking for remains the same. We are looking for well-rounded instructors who have the ability to adapt their skiing, provide student-centered teaching, and who possess the relevant technical understanding to provide accurate prescriptions. We are certifying instructors who are both great skiers and educators at the certification level they hold. Our most recent process inadvertently put emphasis on the parts of an instructor: their ability to complete specific tasks, deliver technical knowledge during teaching segments, and provide MA in written form. Although this process allowed us to observe an instructor's knowledge, it did not give us the opportunity to see how they perform as a whole.

This season, we have removed technical knowledge and movement analysis assessment from the teaching portion of the exam and relocated it to the skiing portion. This will allow us to better observe a candidate's ability to plan, assess, implement, and review throughout a teaching segment that, ideally, more closely replicates how they teach on a daily basis. With our day-to-day students, we are providing information in a way that supports their learning needs and stated outcomes. This typically involves using explanations, demonstrations and feedback that lack the technical jargon we frequently use when discussing skiing with other instructors. It also gives us an opportunity to assess an instructor's people skills, which are how they interact with one another, manage their own behaviors, and communicate with the group. With this change, we will now have the opportunity to have technical discussions with individual candidates via a 30-minute zoom call prior to the skiing/technical assessment. This will allow candidates a better opportunity to share the knowledge and understanding they possess, without having to work their knowledge into a teaching segment.

Along with the relocation of Movement Analysis and Technical Knowledge, we are also assessing people's ability to assess and identify their own movement patterns. Understanding of one's performance compared to the ideal is an important aspect of an instructor's technical knowledge. It is important to know what movement patterns we tend towards and how to change or correct them. This allows us to perform specific demonstrations for our students and move our own skiing towards an ideal, as desired.

Lastly, we will be using Assessment Activities (formerly known as tasks) to observe an instructor's versatility, adaptability, and overall ski performance. We will no longer be scoring specific tasks, but will instead be using various activities to identify movement patterns throughout a candidate's skiing. The goal is to encourage well-developed skiers with the ability to perform in a variety of turns, conditions, and terrain at the level-specific standard.

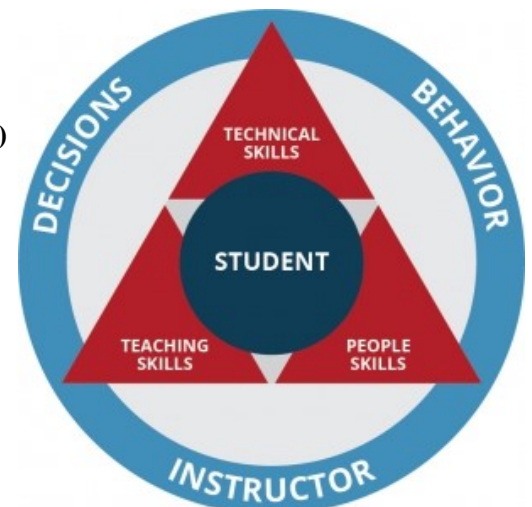
Overall, our goal is to simplify the process by providing an assessment environment that encourages candidates to gain more job-specific skills that will allow them to be successful at certification. We have updated our Certification Prep products to better support this desired outcome. This season, we are offering skill-specific certification prep clinics that also double as continuing education clinics. With the goal of building well-rounded instructors, we feel it is important to create education products that support the overall development of instructors instead of simply preparing them for certification. Below are the list of prep/education clinics that have been or will be offered:

- Level 2/3 Pressure Control Skills (Ski/Technical Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Edging Control Skills (Ski/Technical Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Rotary Control Skills (Ski/Technical Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Movement Analysis Prep (Ski/Technical Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Skiing Skills Assessment Prep (Ski/Technical Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Lesson Planning and Application Prep (Teaching/People Prep)**
- Level 2/3 Teaching/People Skills Assessment Prep (Teaching/People Prep)**

All alpine certification and education events, as well as resources, can be found on the Northern Intermountain Events Calendar, located at psia-ni.org. As an education staff, we look forward to continuing to support our membership in their education journeys.

If you have any questions regarding alpine education and certification, please reach out to me anytime via phone or email:
(208) 991-6228 / tcaballero@psia-ni.org.

Written by,
Taylor Caballero
NI Alpine Education and Certification Chair, Jackson Hole



NI News Cont'd

NI Awards

It's the time in our season to start thinking of peers who deserve nomination for division awards! Help recognize those Northern Intermountain members who have made a positive impact on you, your school, our organization and snowsports industry! If you know someone with an infectious enthusiasm for instructing, an individual who has committed hours to a NI project, or a role model, then take time to nominate them to receive an award. Division awards include the following:

Instructor of the Season

Rookie of the Season

Northern Intermountain Hall of Fame: Lex Kunau Legends Award

Walt Coiner Distinguished Service Award

Complete descriptions and eligibility criteria are on our website: <https://www.psia-ni.org/info/division-awards>. Please submit nomination forms by March 15, 2022 to the Division Secretary, Deann Miller by email (deanntamarack@gmail.com) or snail mail: 138 Brookdale Dr, McCall, ID 83638



NORTHERN INTERMOUNTAIN DIVISION



Featured Member: Martina Vala

Meet **Martina**. Austrian born, skiing was in her blood, learning how to cross country ski first at 3 years old. She started teaching skiing as a 16-year old at Big Mountain, and while in college, taught full time in the winters at Crystal Mountain, WA, where she completed her Levels 1, 2 and 3 Alpine Certification. Martina took a 12-year hiatus from the snowsports industry, teaching English and Creative Writing in public and private schools. She landed in Sun Valley in 2014, where she resumed her career as a snowsports educator. Currently, Martina is an Alpine and Children's Specialist educator and examiner in two regions, Northern Intermountain and Intermountain.

Martina's Profile:

- Member since 1992
- Certified A3, CS2, SB1, FS1, DECL, CECL
- Education: English and Education

- NI Newsletter Chair/Interim Children's Chair
- Her father, Christian Vala, was the first Atomic rep in the Northwest
- Summer Job—Garden center staff member at Webb Nursery
- Passions/hobbies—Riding and training horses, running, cooking



Moose on the Loose!

Just when you think you have seen every crazy thing that can happen in a lesson... Thursday, Jan 13th 2022 will forever be etched in my mind and I am quite sure my students' minds as well. It was an uneventful start to a 4-week program with great snow and a smooth split that blessed me with a dozen advanced kiddos. This was go-

ing to be a GREAT day (and series)! Upon reaching the top, we were informed we needed to head down the other side as Ski Patrol and Mtn-Ops were currently "relocating" a moose. No big deal here, so we just went on our way down the other side. After delivering directions on where to stop and regroup, we proceeded in a very orderly line executing amazing turns, proper spacing and controlled speed.

My leader stopped as directed on a flat, narrow area, and the

rest started to stop in order. Being about 5-10 yards above, I noticed movement off to my left. There was a young female moose barreling down the cut-off straight at my class. I yelled "FREEZE!" and by what I consider a small miracle they all followed the order immediately. It was like a cartoon in that split second as 12 sets of google eyes stared at me with panic. I now believe that saying about life flashing before your eyes as I pictured in that instant 12 kids strewn and trampled across the slope and how I would explain that to multiple parents. Fortunately, using hand signals, the message to not move an inch or say a word was conveyed to them and they obeyed instantly. Miss Moose ran through within 3 feet of the first student and kept going down and around, eventually running across the top of our beginner terrain. My leader informed us that she smelled bad and that he has never been so terrified in his life. Too close any way you look at it.

Written by,
Jessica Wojack Kluth, Board of Directors, Magic Mountain

NI Articles



Collaboration is the Key to Success

Clinicians: Taylor Caballero and Dustin Cooper

Participants: Deann Miller, Colleen Morishita, Heinz Soddamin and Ken Enochs

Collaboration and teamwork are the keys to any great training group. Being an effective trainer is less about your technical knowledge, and more about creating a collaborative space and energy for the group so everyone is comfortable sharing. During the “Train the Trainers” event held at Bogus on December 15th, a group of member school trainers were brought together from the NI region to build a better understanding of the changes to the certification process that are happening, not just in our region, but throughout PSIA-AASI’s 8 regions. Though we did focus on a few assessment activities, the training was to highlight how the group can deliver feedback to each other and change each other’s skiing rather than relying solely on the leader to do movement analysis and give prescriptive feedback.

The changes are an outcome of an ongoing national certification task force and the work they have been doing to create measurable outcomes of certification and a framework to approach those from. The framework and performance outcomes will enable (at some point) instructors to receive college credit through Penn State and possibly even a degree.

We started by discussing changes to the assessments/exams. The assessment focus in the exams has become more real world reflective of our teaching and observations of what the instructor does in their lesson. Collaboration is huge between the instructor and the student. The Learning Connection provides the framework for People Skills, Teaching Skills and Technical Skills...each of those areas have their own fundamentals. The instructor’s decisions, behavior and student motivations, personality, etc. are key. People Skills and the ability to connect with others...after all, we want to have them come back for more lessons...are a main focus of the teaching day of the assessment/exam. Certification levels dictate which levels of skier an instructor is equipped to teach. That is pretty much the same as the past.

Movement analysis is a large part of what we do as instructors while we are teaching. To be more reflective of what we do as instructors, movement analysis will be a large piece of the assessment/exam process. The desired format of movement analysis is to provide non-judgmental feedback. For instance, being able to observe and describe what the ski is doing (ski/snow interaction) and what the body is doing to create that interaction, comparing that to what the ideal ski/snow interaction is, and identifying what changes could be made by the skier to move towards the ideal. Adding movement analysis into every part of training will be valuable not just to be able to obtain certification, but also to make better instructors.

We will not be passed or failed based on the past “skiing tasks.” We are now responsible for “assessment activities.” The reality has been acknowledged that there is no “perfect” way to ski a task. There are a variety of ways and body types skiing those. Our overall skiing is what will be looked at and our abil-

ity, especially at Level 3, to change our utilization of skiing skills (edging, rotary and pressure) to achieve an outcome as well as how it relates to our versatility and adaptability. The assessment activities are there to help highlight possible areas of improvement needed.

In our morning session, we picked an assessment activity. We chose railroad tracks. Our first focus was to notice what our ski/snow interaction was. Were we scribing arcs? Were our skis leaving a slightly brushed track? After our self-assessment, we partnered up and observed each other’s skiing. We observed and described what we saw in our partner’s skiing and when the desired outcome of railroad tracks was achieved and when it was not. We were, as a group, able to discuss the movement patterns needed to create the desired outcome. In the group discussion, we observed that it was a blending of several skills that are required for this specific assessment activity, but focusing on simultaneous tipping of the legs and feet, we were all able to achieve better results. Though the training was focused on a specific activity, it was really more about how the group could work together so everyone could make changes and improvements in not just their skiing, but their understanding of body movements and ski performance.

The takeaways from the morning session were that how we engaged with each other: collaboration and non-judgmental feedback were optimum to create a positive and what would be a successful exam experience. The ability to think and mix things up for movements and ski performance were the desired goal...not a memorized progression. Keying in the desired ski performance and then refining a couple of movements were successful. We are using guided discovery as the way to help each other best own the desired results.

In the afternoon we did the same exercise with a focus of short radius turns. We also played with edge engagement at different parts of the turn vs. rotation control and whether that was a simultaneous change or two-footed change. We went through the same process of self-assessment, as well as an assessment of each other and what our desired outcome was to be with a couple of focuses to help us arrive there. All this took place in collaborative discussions in the group. Every participant received valuable feedback about their own skiing from the group not just from the clinician. We did have some very “aha” moments in our skiing that really came from observations and discussions from the group.

The takeaway from the whole day was that being a trainer is much less about the knowledge and skiing skills that we possess and more about engaging and using our people skills to be a facilitator of collaboration within our training groups. The collective knowledge, understanding, and feedback of a group is far superior (and more fun!) than just one person.



Photos by, Mark Poore

Written by, Deann Miller & Colleen Morishita, NI Officers, Tamarack Resort & Brundage Mountain

NI Articles Cont'd



“‘Final Form...’ The way to ski 1980.”

55-Year Quest for the Perfect Turn

Growing up with a steep hill in the back yard in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Bonnie Wetmore was introduced to winter snow activities as a young girl, hanging on to the back of toboggans, skating and playing hockey on lakes, Nordic skiing and eventually downhill skiing by the time she was five years old. She immediately fell in love with downhill skiing and kept her Northland skis, with reindeer etched into their tips, near her bed every night.

Her first rope tow memory was getting her scarf got caught in the wheel at the top and it started to hang her around the neck. The operator casually untangled her scarf and said, “Don’t worry. It happens all the time.”

Despite a few bumps and bruises in her youth, Bonnie’s memories of skiing were full of winter fun and family ski trips. “My dad was not able to ski due to an old injury, but he loved to take us on ski trips everywhere. He often would hitch a ride on the Tucker snowcat to spot us skiing and then reward the driver with a bottle of whiskey.” Right after junior high Bonnie moved to the East Coast with her mother and eventually got a job at a small ski area as a junior ski patrol for three nights a week. “We had to make up our own emergency patrol kits. Mine was packed so full I could barely close it. I was prepared for anything!”

Bonnie headed to Colby Junior College, a small liberal arts school that happened to have a ski team. Bonnie was not interested in the competitive side of skiing but was offered the opportunity to train alongside one of the coaches and learn the more technical aspects of the sport as a “junior” coach. This was the beginning of learning the precision and art of skiing that she still possesses over 55 years later. She continued gaining experience through ski adventures at mountains like Mt Washington and the headwall of Tuckerman’s Ravine, deciding her junior year to follow her passion for skiing as a lifetime profession.

In 1969, Bonnie landed her first teaching job at Black Mountain Ski School in New Hampshire. The ski area was a farmer’s back yard with a T-bar and beginner area rope tow where a skier could make maybe four turns total. Bonnie lived in a tiny cabin near the hill, her first real independent experience, and provided ski tips and lessons to folks on the hill. The first ski school director Bonnie worked for, Arthur Doucette, saw something special in Bonnie’s passion for skiing and teaching, and encouraged her to train and examine for the Associates Certificate at Mt Cranmore Ski Area in the Eastern Division. She was one of five candidates to examine. At the time, the certification process was called “American Skiing,” (final form maneuvers) started by a group of Austrian instructors. Part of her training included “skiing with a hat held tight in between our knees and *wedeln* turns down the hill. For the exam we were not allowed to use the hat as a prop.” The following season Bonnie passed her Full Certification.

Having dreamt about the West and big mountains, big snow, big skiing and teaching opportunities, Bonnie headed west in the fall of 1972, landing in Colorado. Bonnie reflects, “Leaving the East was a major decision for me. However, the experiences I

gained and professional advancement in my career became critical for my growth. It was a real learning time for me with really great people who became lifelong friends, family and mentors. During her time at Aspen/Snowmass, Bonnie worked under Curt Chase’s directorship, one of the forefathers of PSIA. “He was a great director and gifted skier with an easy, relaxed and nimble skiing style. At his encouragement, along with that of other supervisors, I went through the certification process again in Rocky Mountain Division (Levels 1,2,3) and eventually achieved my DCL status in RM as well. Revisiting this process gave me a whole new exciting outlook of skiing and teaching skiing, and training with mentors like D-Team members (now National Team) was invaluable to my growth in the industry.”

Life was great in Aspen, but Bonnie, now married and with a young daughter, experienced the changing Aspen and influx of wealth and decided to find a place where they could buy land and build a house and new life for the family. They moved to Sun Valley in 1984, where they pursued their dreams, becoming long-time community members of the Valley. She was hired by snow-sports director Rainer Kolb. In 1985 she was invited to DCL training at Bogus Basin by Carol Levine. “It wasn’t an official tryout for me, rather based on my experience, getting to know others in the division and showing what I knew. There was no pressure, and it was a successful day! Shortly thereafter, I officially tried out to be an examiner and was an examiner in NI for 9 years. I also served on the board and was an education chair for a few years as well.” Carol became one of Bonnie’s greatest mentors and closest friends as she adjusted to life, skiing and teaching in Sun Valley and NI as a clinician and examiner. “She had, and still has, so much to give as a technician. Her understanding of mechanics is impeccable and MA so accurate, yet she can explain it in so many ways.” On Baldy, she began shadowing advanced ski instructor Dick Gatsby. “I chose to shadow Dick because he was welcoming and took his six people into the bowls, which I was not terrible familiar yet. Dick had an instinctive ability to find the lines that were not common and gave the guests such pleasure.” A passionate teacher and skier of the sport herself, clearly Bonnie learned from the best!

I first met Bonnie in the winter of 2013 in Sun Valley. Within minutes of talking with her (and more importantly following Bonnie’s first turns of the day off the top of the mountain!), Bonnie became one of my greatest mentors who encouraged and challenged my own professional pursuits! Her passion for skiing, technical understanding, and valuing of the education within the industry is an inspiration to all those she has connected with over the years of her career. Despite retirement, you will still spot her on Baldy working on the “perfect” turn, or hear her enthusiastically discussing the nuances of skiing. Congratulations on your retirement, Bonnie! You will be missed as an educator and ski model in the industry. And yet, we will always know where to find you, and will remain inspired by your arcs of perfection on the slopes!



Bonnie Wetmore and a girl's best friend
(Express Photo by Dick Dorworth)
Photo by a combination of insurance... enjoyable skiing

**Written by, Martina Vala,
NI Newsletter Chair, Sun Valley**

Dick Dorworth photo and article on Teaching Women to Ski, 1997.

Carve' Diem

Please e-mail articles, photos, ads, etc. for publication to:

media@psia-ni.org

Subject: Newsletter submission

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