

XCitation

Official Newsletter of the Canadian Association of Nordic Ski Instructors
Bulletin Officiel de l'Association Canadienne des Moniteurs de Ski Nordique



Henry Madsen can still smile at the end of one of his tumbling routines – I'd say this rates a 10.5!!! – see page 8 for tips on how to fall like a pro!

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Got something to say?

Deadlines for next year's XCitation are

Issue	Deadline:
Christmas	Dec 15, 2008
Winter	Jan 24, 2009
Spring	Mar15, 2009



Retiree learns important lessons when staging racing comeback

This article was wrung by Sherryl Yeager from three articles originally written by Patti Shales Lefkos and printed in the Vernon Morning Star.

When her right hip was shattered in a car accident, Patti Shales Lefkos was forced to take a seven year hiatus from skate ski racing. After

working with a personal trainer and preparing for a grueling 800 km wilderness canoe trip on the Yukon River in 2006, Patti decided it was time to break her old personal best time of 2 hours and 9 minutes in the Sovereign Lake 30 km skate race.

Patti started cross-country skiing at 30, and took on skate skiing in her 40s. When she retired from her job as a principal and moved to the Okanagan, she decided to tackle the threat of osteoporosis and arthritis, compounded by mild asthma and the aftermath of the car accident, by capitalizing on her competitive nature.

Her husband Barry Hodgins, a phys-ed teacher, continuing student of fitness and nutrition and both cross-country and downhill ski

instructor, was her trainer and coach.

Stuffed with butter tarts and summer berry pies the couple returned to Vernon on Nov. 5, 2007,

excited to begin living at Silver Star full time, and started walking and later snowshoeing for an hour three or four times a week. Finally, more snow arrived and they eased in to cross-country ski training with a short classic ski from their home on The Knoll to Silver Star village for a latte at Bugaboos Cafe.



Frosty from the workout but still smiling, Patti Shales Lefkos shows her form at a midseason training race.

"Skiing makes me feel good, especially when the workout is over.

The sense of accomplishment, feeling of physical well-being and progress make the effort of slogging up hills worthwhile," says Patti.

However, the coach rapidly ramped up the schedule to snowshoeing to the summit of Silver Star, continuing on to Paradise Camp and back to the village, alternating with relaxed hour-long ski sessions on Woodland Bell, a beginner trail at Sovereign Lake nordic area. Then, things got serious.

Her moaning, groaning, kicking and screaming fell on deaf ears as the training ramped up after the Christmas holidays. After a sweaty, uphill climb during one training session, complete with some bushwhacking, Patti tried to remove her ski to go inside the lodge for a quick pit stop, and the plastic pull-tab on my binding snapped off and it took ten minutes to get her ski off.

Lesson one: check your equipment before each outing.

After continuing on and grunting and grinding their way to the summit of Silver Star, they had removed layers and the sun

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was shining. The layers went back on and they skied downhill to the village, for a well earned treat at the local bakery.

Lessons two and three: Replace all the layers you've got for the downhill run and plan a treat destination to end the workout.

Lesson four: tough workouts make race day seem easy.

With that in mind they did two more tough workouts in the next four days. These were Patti's idea because she believed she needed a kick-start to counteract holiday treats. Increasing her weights workouts while catching up on missed time trials and hill intervals also seemed like a good idea at the time.

Lesson five: don't increase too many things at once. The combination of uphill intervals and forgetting to use her inhaler did her in. Two days of complete rest were necessary before easing back to training.

A three-hour skate clinic in late December with June Hawkins, Sovereign Lake ski school director, had left Patti with lots to think about. Hawkins quickly pinpointed specific areas for improvement in her technique.

"It was wonderful feeling fit for the first time in years, actually enjoying speed drills and finding hills easy that three months earlier made me want to cry"

Lesson six and seven: Even the most experienced skier can benefit from lessons, and even though it is difficult to watch your flaws on the screen, video is an outstanding tool to illustrate technique elements in need of refinement.

In her never-ending quest to make race day more fun, Patti decided to get her skis serviced.

Good decision. She learned if the ski base looks fuzzy, with gray or white patches, like hers, it has oxidized, closing the pores of the surface layer so wax won't penetrate.

Lesson eight: find a technician who is a skier and takes his job seriously.

Patti thought she had everything covered. But two days before her mid-season Jan. 27 training race she woke up with an excruciating pain below her left shoulder blade and nausea experienced only once previously due to a shoulder dislocation.

Lesson nine: Find a physiotherapist you trust who will listen to your desperate whine when you call for an emergency appointment.

Diagnosis: her sixth level ribs were fixated or stuck. Despite muscle soreness following the treatment, the pain dissipated during the next two days and she was able to complete the mid-season Overlander 30 km race at Stake Lake. The first 27 km were actually fun.

Patti placed third in her age group of only four women over 60, with a time of 2 hours and 25 minutes. This was well off her goal of breaking two hours, but with five weeks to go there was still time for adequate distance and speed work.

"Years ago I discovered training is hard but racing is addictive. However, overall fitness is the true goal, race or not."

January training reminded Patti of perhaps the most important lesson: attitude is everything. As distances and intensity increased, she struggled with confidence. Negative self-talk makes it twice as hard to ski skate up the next hill or to relax enough on a fast downhill curve to step turn instead of snow plow.

Pumped from matching her predicted mid-season race time she decided another race would be a fun form of training as long as she could maintain a relaxed pace.

She thought the 30 km solo portion of the Silver Star 75 the following Sunday fit the bill. Organized by an enthusiastic team of Silver Star volunteers with participants in crazy costumes, the February 3 race was a hilarious event. Hyped by the community spirit and race atmosphere she completed the first two 7.5 km laps too fast. She finished in two hours and 26 minutes, just one minute slower than her time of the previous week.

"It was wonderful feeling fit for the first time in years, actually enjoying speed drills and finding hills easy that three months earlier made me want to cry," she said.

Pleased with her progress and perhaps feeling a touch over-confident, Patti crossed the fine line between too little and too much. Two hard workouts two days in a row; speed drills on a Saturday afternoon and 27 km long slow distance the next morning left her immune system unprepared for close contact with the influenza A virus.

All the nasty symptoms listed on the NeoCitran package raged through her system during the next week. Then the bug hit her bronchial tubes, not a good sign for an asthma sufferer. The doctor advised Patti that a flu virus remains in your system for six weeks and during a vigorous workout could attack the heart muscle and cause lasting damage

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or in extreme cases, death.

Several prescriptions, three new mystery novels and five DVDs gathered, she went home. Coach Barry tucked Patti in with a blanket on the couch and ordered rest.

Patti rationalized her disappointment at not being able to compete and achieve her goal.



"Years ago I discovered training is hard but racing is addictive. However, overall fitness is the true goal, race or not. My training was on track and while I'm not sure my goal of breaking two hours was a real possibility, a time of two hours 10 minutes was well within reach."

Patti says that with her students she had three rules; be safe, try your best, have fun. The race season had been great fun and she'd tried her best. She decided it was time to be safe.

Patti Shales Lefkos is a freelance journalist currently at work on a book about the history of Silver Star Mountain. She is also CANSI Level 2 cross-country instructor. She was an informal instructor for about 10 years - teaching Grade 6 kids in several schools where she was principal. Last year she formally instructed Grade 4 students for the school program at Sovereign Lake.

SKI/SNOWSHOE FOR A LIVING!

Cross Country Connection is looking for DYNAMIC INDIVIDUALS with passion for sport and high levels of customer service to join their dedicated team of outdoor enthusiasts to work in Whistler and Whistler Olympic Park.

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Basic cross country skiing skills are necessary and training will be provided.

Very Competitive Wages, Season's Pass, and Pro Deals are some of the benefits. Full and Part Time hours available.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND YOUR WINTER ON THE TRAILS?

Apply with cover letter and resume to:

info@crosscountryconnection.ca or fax 604-905-0571

Instructor profile:

Chris McCubbins - An athlete, instructor, and a mentor to a community of children

By Jeff Hampshire

Many instructors just do that, simply instruct. Others, like Chris McCubbins, are true ambassadors and mentors of cross-country skiing.

Chris started skiing in 1974 on a pair of woodies from Fresh Air Experience. He claims he was a terrible skier, and his skiing partners even counted the seconds between his falls.

When he got to where he fell less than 10 times during a ski outing, he felt like he was doing great. He basically ran and slapped like crazy, but he enjoyed being out in the winter on the snow.

Chris spent almost his entire 27-year teaching career with elementary students in the Winnipeg 1 School Division at Kent Road, Riverview, and David Livingston schools. He retired in 2001 at age 55.

Chris is a certified C.A.N.S.I Level II instructor who also instructs at the Windsor Park Nordic center in downtown Winnipeg. When he's not teaching and mentoring he can be found logging obscene hours on his skis.

In February 2003, the inaugural Great Get Off Your But And Ski Event (GGOYBAS for short) was held. It was Chris' idea to organize a corporate event to help start and fund an inner city ski program. The program brings skiing to a community of school children that otherwise would never be possible.

Today, six schools in Winnipeg participate in ski lessons and mentoring through Chris' 6-week inner

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Chris McCubbins and some of the young recipients of his GGOYBAS events huddle for a group shot. Chris is the tallish one in the orange hat....

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city and at risk youth program. Expanding this program is his main goal, and Chris works diligently every year to promote, organize and direct this program. With the help of the Cross-Country Ski Association of Manitoba board member Ruth Marr, Chris has been able to increase the number of participants over the years and looks forward to the day when expanding his program to a full time 5 day a week program becomes a reality.

Visit www.getoffyourbuttandski.com to view Chris' corporate relay fundraiser. For more highlights on Chris and his adventures as an athlete, which include gold medals at both the Pan Am games and NCAA championships, visit the CCSAM's web page at www.ccski.mb.ca/news_ChrisMcCubbins.htm.

Jeff Hampshire is President & CEO of Nordic Adventures & Consultants in Winnipeg, MB

Come one, come all, come west!

The CANSI National Seminar and Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 2007-2008 season will be hosted by CANSI Pacific at the site of the 2010 Winter Olympics - Whistler, British Columbia, from December 4 to 8, 2008.

Dec 4 – 5: Telemark - Whistler Mountain

Dec 6: Technical meeting and AGM - Whistler, BC

Dec 7-8: Cross-country - Whistler Olympic Park, Callaghan Valley

Check the CANSI website often for updates on accommodation and other news about the AGM. Come west, see the new Callaghan Valley trails at Whistler Olympic Park, join a committee, get your input out there!

Those who are interested in attending and/or sharing accommodation may contact Henry Madsen info@mountain.cansi.ca or Mark Simpson at info@pacific.cansi.ca



It's easy to fall hard for cross-country

By Henry Madsen

There has been a wealth of material written on various techniques in cross country skiing. You only have to Google "V skate" or "Diagonal Stride" and you can access information on the finest details of belly button placement and nose hair alignment! Oddly however, the literature is devoid on one of the activities most engaged in by cross country skiers.

My extensive research, both in field and on video tape, reveals that almost all skiers fall. And yet, I could find nothing on the proper preparatory stance, technique, and execution of a fall. The assumption it seems, is that any fall that results in a broken ski or a dislocated joint automatically scores a ten. This is of course false. A broken ski automatically scores only a five. Other factors, such as facial expression, appropriate pre and post-fall comments, and ground position must be taken into account.

I am considered by my cross country colleagues to be an unofficial authority on the subject of falling, and consequently I have taken it on myself to write the definitive article on the subject. I have fallen on bunny hills, around trees, even on the flats. I have noted with some interest that my skis often seem to be traveling in an upwards vertical trajectory, to parallel the descent of my head.

I can still hear my wife's cry as my head rebounded like a super-ball off the icy track. "You left a divot in the snow!" she shrieked. Indeed, I am one of the few instructors who regularly wears a helmet while teaching a jackrabbit program. I have fallen off T-bars, chair lifts, and ski patrol sleds during the rush to the ski patrol shack. I have even fallen off bar stools, but that is a different article altogether.

The type of fall I hate the most is called "The Human Post Hole." This is primarily a back country technique, but I have executed this move effectively on groomed cross country tracks when passing another skier and being too close the ungroomed edge. Essentially, one leg plummets into soft snow up to the confluence of your anatomy, either down a tree well or onto the soft snow at the side of a track. Your other leg continues to preload and kick at the surface.

There are two problems with this technique. The first is that it inevitably results in a rotation as the free leg continues to propel the skier around the pivot point. Without rapid intervention the skier may drill himself into a descending vortex.

The second problem is that the technique completely lacks style, and as such, often results in profane explosions emanating from the rapidly descending skier. Of some note is the changing pitch of these vulgarities due to the rotational "Doplar Effect" as the frustration and consequent speed of rotation increase.

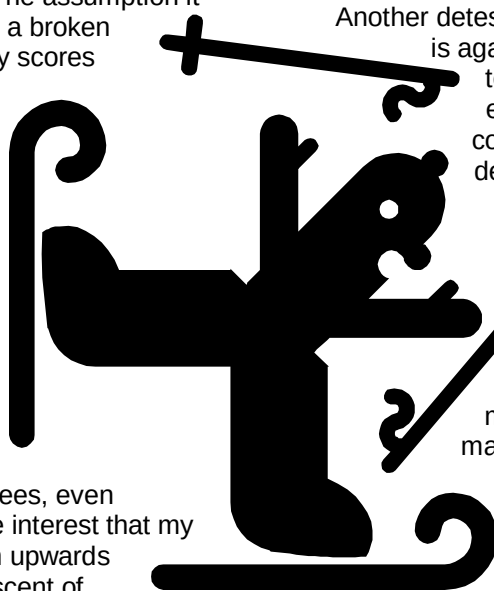
Another detested fall is the "Whip Whack." This is again primarily a back country technique, although I have seen it executed effectively on hilly cross country terrain. Essentially, you descend a steep slope with a heavy pack, and then simply cross your tips. Alternatively, and for more style points, you can carve a turn and catch your downhill edges. Your skis suddenly cease their glide, while your head maintains momentum, until the end of the arc made from your penduluming body.

At this point, your pack flips over your head, the straps pick you up by the armpits, whip you over the top of the pack, and whack your body into the trail. Sometimes this sequence is repeated over and over again, like the coiled spring slinky toy of my youth. Whip... WHACK... whip... WHACK... whip... WHACK!

An interesting style point on this technique is to bury your head in the snow on the first WHACK so that the head serves as a brake.

In this case, the pack, if it is sufficiently heavy, may drive onto your snow implanted skull with sufficient force to bury you up to your bindings. This is known as the "Pile Driver Variation." To gain the significant "Pile Driver Variation" bonus points, it is critical that the technique is witnessed by a friend, preferably one with a shovel.

Ski patrols doing their spring cleanup have found inverted skiers, presumably months after the execution of the pile driver. This is especially sad, since points cannot be awarded without eye-witness verification.



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Perhaps the most common fall, and likely the most embarrassing, is known as the DDKDP, or the "Doggy Do Klister Double Pole." This occurs primarily during certification courses, or during demonstrations to students.

In this impressive technique, the skier explains the importance of forward lean during the initiation of the traditional double pole. She then proceeds to demonstrate the same. Unbeknownst to the demonstrator however, is a recent canine deposit at the end of the training grid.

To execute this fall effectively, an audience of impressionable skiers is lined up beside the track, and the instructor begins acceleration with uncommonly effectively grip. Once effective velocity is achieved, the instructor then commits all her weight to the poling action, with the hips slightly forward of the binding, whereupon, the DD immediately velcros to the snow.

The instructor now notes that her forward lean is way past too aggressive, evidenced by the fact that her ski tips are 6 inches from her nose. Her students are suitably impressed by this form that, except for un-splayed skis, approximates Eddie the Eagle during a ski jump. Because her hands are now fully extended behind her back the skier's head now acts like a hard rubber ball at the end of a sock, being bounced off the pavement.

I have seen this technique demonstrated by my wife to resounding applause, and a solid 9 for a score. She likely would have achieved a perfect 10 had she recovered with an appropriate "Sh**," instead of the less fitting "Da**." In her defense, she did argue that her response was based on the feel of the impact rather than the cause of the impact.

Having established myself as an expert in ski falls, I will now relate a fall of which I am particularly proud. As mentioned earlier, I have expertise in a number of techniques and situations, one being a fall from a chair lift. This fall occurred during a telemark weekend at a resort in Banff National Park.

Five of us were skiing together, which meant an odd man out on the quad lifts. On one particular lift ride, I was positioned at the end of the loading station beside three downhillers of rather generous proportion. I would not have minded so much had they been proportioned fore, but their aft was described as "a shovel and two axe handles across the beam."

There was precious little seat left for me at the staging area and I found myself planted on the side handle rather than on the seat. The assertive sideways tilt of the chair caused by the unequal load put my head dangerously close to the cable wheels

above us. This however did not concern me nearly as much as the fact that my position on the side rail made lowering the security bar impossible. Fortunately, despite nothing to hang on to, I was able to get a good grip on the side rail of the chair through my ski pants.

I likely could have made it up the lift in this awkward position, but the lift attendant, alerted by the hysterical laughter of my "friends," hit the emergency stop, causing the chair, now 10 feet off the snow, to swing wildly.

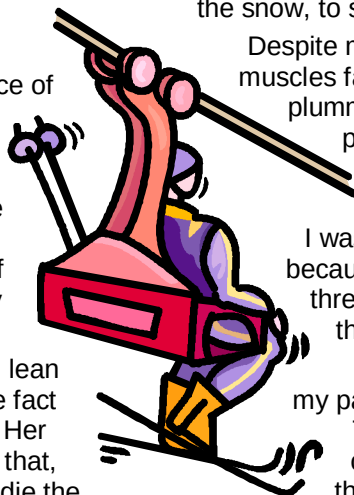
Despite my firm grip on the side rail, my muscles fatigued and I lost my hold and plummeted to the snow below. I executed a perfect three bounce routine, including the difficult technique of pressing my nose between my shoulder blades.

I was spared injury from above however, because with my exit from the chair, my three chair partners shifted and jammed in the remaining four seats.

It remains a point of contention that my partners scored my fall at only an 8.

They did say that they briefly considered awarding a 9, but dismissed that generosity when they recalled that my arms were flailing through the air rather than being tucked neatly at my sides. I suppose that I should be happy however, considering that, had my chair partners not been able to remain on the chair, I could have been part of a whole new pile driver variation.

If you have a new falls to add to the repertoire, please write to X-Citation. Other instructors, who have long been seeking the definitive word on technique, will truly be appreciative.



CANSI's National Office moves to Chelsea Quebec and Lafleur de la Capitale

After issuing a RFP and an extensive search, CANSI is moving its National Office to Chelsea Quebec. Lafleur de la Capitale will be taking on the responsibilities for the office.

Lafleur offers a full "turn key" service in the areas of recreation management, land management and special event management. They deliver many services in the National Capital Area including many associated with X-C skiing. Lafleur was responsible for the overall management of the Gatineau Park for the NCC.

A number of their staff are CANSI instructors, so they are familiar with our needs and expectations.

Please welcome Danielle Griffin (National Office Coordinator), Robert Lafleur and Gary Fournier, the three key individuals who will work with CANSI.

Secrétariat CANSI National Office
8 Douglas Road
Chelsea Quebec J9B 1K4
Phone: [\(819\) 360-6700](tel:(819)360-6700)
Fax: [\(819\) 827-1800](tel:(819)827-1800)
office@cansi.ca

Join me in congratulating Lafleur de la Capitale in coming aboard.

Garry Almond
membership@cansi.ca





POSITIONS VACANT

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING INSTRUCTORS

Canmore, Alberta

Trail Sports, the cross country ski school and rental shop, at the Canmore Nordic Centre, Alberta, has openings for cross country skiing instructors for the 2008/2009 season. Employment will run from November 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

Full time (40 hours per week) and part time positions are available. Responsibilities include ski instruction, retail sales and rentals. Wages are commensurate with experience. Staff development opportunities, retail discounts and pro deals are available.

Canadian Association of Nordic Ski Instructors certification is an asset but certification courses are available on site, for experienced skiers.

For further information please
contact

John Gallagher

1 403 678 6764

john@trailsports.ab.ca



Ask A Pro:

Off season balance training

by Keith Nicol

I am a big fan of off season balance training. As instructors we all know that balance is the Achilles heel of most cross-country skiers. Who ever heard someone say "I have too much balance"?

I have tested a variety of balancing aids and in previous issues of X-Citation I have reported on some of these.

But this summer I came across another one that is worth mentioning. It is the BOSU Balance Trainer.

What I like about it is that you can easily do one-footed balance practice on it (as well as a host of other exercises) and by adjusting the pressure you can make it harder or easier to balance on (See photo).

Once you get good of course, you can lift light weights or try balancing with your eyes closed. See the youtube video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3R7ZSgWubtg> to see the BOSU Balance Trainer and other balance aids in action. For more info contact Twist Conditioning at www.sportconditioning.ca

Contributor Keith Nicol is a CANSI Level 4 X-C Ski instructor and Level 3 Telemark. He writes the Tech Tip columns for Ski Trax and is the CANSI Atlantic Technical Committee Rep. He can be reached at knicol@swgc.mun.ca



Instructor profile:

Being a late bloomer can just make you keener!

By Keith Woods

I discovered telemark skiing at least 10 years ago while on a trip to Mont Tremblant. I saw two people coming down this huge mogul field so gracefully, and thought to myself how cool they looked. It took five years before I was able to get into the sport, but man, even though I am only 45 years old, I wish I had discovered telemark much sooner in life!

I have only been telemarking for two full seasons now, and just love it so much. I have even been able to summer back-country ski on the West Coast and have been able to extend my ski season by hiking for my turns when the ski resorts in New England, near my cottage, close for the season. A middle school teacher in my other life, I have some skills to transfer to my new instructor role. I am looking forward to spreading the joy of telemark skiing in Southern

Ontario this coming season, where I am in a professionally mentored program this year with Ski Telemark Ltd.

Ski Telemark is the largest mobile telemark ski school in Canada and has provided instructional services to more than 20,000 clients of all ages and abilities. Ski Telemark will be celebrating their 25th year this season and I will be the 40th instructor on their roster!

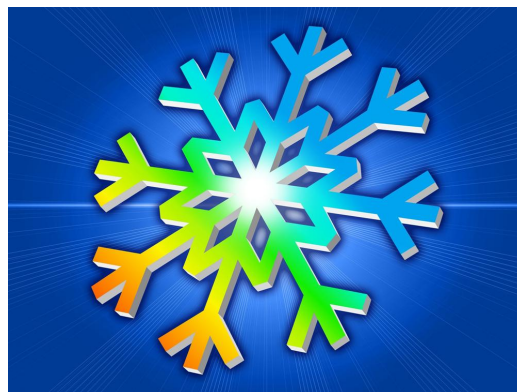
Ski Telemark services private and public ski clubs and their members throughout southern central Ontario. Owned and operated by Holly Blefgen, ski school director and Steve Kahn, operations manager, Ski Telemark also hosts telemark race events, festivals and promotes the sport of telemark skiing through the formation of Telemark Ski Canada. Come join us for the best telemark turns in Ontario!

I stay in shape in summer by doing a lot of cycling, although I found that hiking steep hills and other terrain best mimicked the workout of the telemark turn.

I can't wait for the snow to fly!



Keith Woods takes some time out from his turns to show some skin – you'd think he was on the West Coast, mixing snow and shorts like that....



Répertoire CANSI Directory

Secrétariat CANSI National
Office
Renee Scanlon
4531 Southclark Place
Ottawa, Ontario K1T 3V2
(613)822-1267 office@cansi.ca
www.cansi.ca

Paul Graner, President
president@cansi.ca or
advisor1@ontario.cansi.ca

Glenn Lee, Technical Chair
technical@cansi.ca

Secrétariat XCitation Office
Sherryl Yeager
c/o CANSI National Office
communications@cansi.ca

Regional Offices

Board Rep./Délégué au conseil

Tech. Comm. Rep/Délégué technique

CANSI Atlantic/Atlantique
c/o Keith Payne
3 Westview Avenue
Cornerbrook, NL A2H 3B7
(709) 634-9962 info@atlantic.cansi.ca

Keith Payne

Keith Nicol

CANSI Central
c/o Sport Manitoba
200 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4M2
(204) 925-5839 info@central.cansi.ca

Dan Bulloch

Ken Schykulski

CANSI Québec
c/o Ski Québec
4545, ave Pierre-de-Coubertin
CP 1000 Succ. M
Montréal, QC H1V 3R2
Ph. (450) 669-5378 info@quebec.cansi.ca or for course co-ordinators <http://www.cansi.ca/en/about/contact/quebec.php>

Norman Thibault

Norman Thibault

CANSI Ontario
14 Willard Gardens
Toronto, ON M6S 1G1
1 (888) 226-7446
(416) 410-0827 info@ontario.cansi.ca
for Ontario course co-ordinators by region, go to <http://www.cansi.ca/en/about/contact/ontario.php>

Garry Almond
advisor2@ontario.cansi.ca

Paul Jorgensen
xc-technical-dir@ontario.cansi.ca
Glenn Lee
telemark@ontario.cansi.ca

CANSI Mountain
4511 – 109th Ave
Edmonton, AB T6A 1R4
Ph: (780) 468-1492 info@mountain.cansi.ca

Henry Madsen

Henry Madsen

CANSI Pacific
c/o Canada West Mountain School
47 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P1
Ph: (604) 420-SKIS info@pacific.cansi.ca

Mark Simpson

Mark Simpson