

# NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN NORDIC SKI PATROL



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## IT'S A MAD, MAD RACE

by Jonathan Shefftz

So there I was at the Sugarbush/Mad River Glen Randonnee Ski Mountaineering Race on February 5<sup>th</sup>. This was the third such race held in the northeast, but the first-ever northeast stop in the Life-Link® national series. For the first time a westerner was in attendance: McLean, the most famous American name in ski mountaineering, recently profiled in Outside magazine, The New Yorker, and even the wedding section of the New York Times.

The pre-race meeting had warned of a narrow bridge near the start which would require single-file crossing. With thirty-seven racers I didn't want to get stuck behind a big bottleneck, so I sprinted from the back of the pack to the front.

I saw the Scarpa F1 race boots, Dynafit bindings and Atomic rando race skis of Dave Lamb (winner of the two previous eastern races and member of Gore-Tex sponsored adventure racing teams) already way out in front. No point in trying to match his pace. But Chris Casey, who took second at Jay Peak last year (I finished third), was now just barely in front of me, so I tried to keep up with him.

Big mistake. Sprinting ahead of the pack had me redlining. The trail we were ascending was quite steep, and my partial-length kicker skins were not coping well with the strange snow conditions. My lungs were working at a sprinting pace, yet my skis were moving at a recreational pace. All I wanted to do was ...

...stop and take a rest. I realized that by staying at my brother-in-law's OJ-deprived house I'd had nothing to drink for breakfast instead of my usual morning liquid intake of large quantities of diluted orange juice. Starting a race dehydrated – not a good thing.

My pace slowed, and I started getting passed: first by a guy with Dynafits, which was okay (he eventually took second), and then by ...well, I'd rather not recall those painful moments. I limped my way up to the top of Mad River Glen, then off we went on the narrow ridgeline Long Trail hiking route to Sugarbush North/Glen Ellen. Occasionally the trail presented us with a very steep but short ascent, along with a few crazy narrow downhills, but otherwise a gradual ascent that was mainly just fast shuffling.

Rehydrating myself with water, I was able to catch my breath and feel stronger. Despite the narrow width, I ended up with many opportunities to pass everyone except for Dave Lamb (who'd probably reached Killington already), the other guy on Dynafits (since identified as PJ Telep from nearby Waitsfield), Chris Casey, and then, suddenly, in my sights appeared ...McLean.

I was right on top of those Scarpa F1 race boots, Dynafit TLT bindings, and skinny lightweight skis all the rest of the way to the skin>ski transition at the top of Sugarbush. However, I lost sight during the descent. In my addled state of mind at the transition I had wasted time by pointlessly detaching one of my ski leashes (fumblingly reattached), and also separated the *(continued on page two)*

## PATROL AWARDS BANQUET

Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

Countree Living Restaurant  
Cocktails 6pm – Dinner 7pm

If you are starting to forget what your fellow patrollers look like due to our less than stellar ski season, plan to come to our annual awards banquet to get reacquainted. Patrollers, candidates, friends, family and significant others are all invited. We'll be gathering in the banquet room at the Countree Living restaurant, just down from Northfield Mountain on Route 2 in Erving (next to the bowling alley.) The patrol has reduced the cost of the banquet to \$10/meal for both patrollers and guests. *Patrollers and candidates will be refunded the cost of their own meals at the banquet.*

The program after the dinner will include awards, door prizes for all, and perhaps a surprise or two. Many patrollers have been active in spite of the lack of snow. Nominations for the Bill Hawley Outstanding Patroller of the Year award should be emailed to Tom Deam: [tcdeam@verizon.net](mailto:tcdeam@verizon.net). Unfortunate nominations for the Flaming Flounder Award should be sent to Sue Menick: [suemenick@yahoo.com](mailto:suemenick@yahoo.com).

Our banquet menu includes the following:

*Hot hors d'oeuvres*

*Fresh fruit with sorbet or sherbet*

*Fresh garden salad with chef's house dressing*

Choice of entrée:

*Prime Rib au jus*

*Grilled lemon herb chicken*

*Grilled tuna with herb butter*

*Entrées include bacon, cheddar, scallion twice-baked potatoes, a mixed vegetable sauté, choice of beverage and dessert – Keli's ice cream cake creation.*

**All checks and reservations should be mailed to Bob Perry by Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.** If you have questions, or would like to make arrangements for a vegetarian meal, call Bob at 413-863-2658 (home) or 413-659-4468 (work), or email: [perryrf@nu.com](mailto:perryrf@nu.com).

### BANQUET RESERVATIONS

Name _____	# Guests _____
<u>Number/Selection</u>	<u>Cost</u>
____ Prime Rib	at \$10/meal= _____
____ Chicken	at \$10/meal= _____
____ Tuna	at \$10/meal= _____

**TOTAL AMOUNT DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Northfield Mountain Nordic Ski Patrol  
Mail to: Bob Perry, 42 West Gill Road, Gill, MA 01376

# CHOCOLATE POT CHAT

by Tom Deam

It just seems like six months ago that Refresher was completed and now the wax has really dried on the unused skis. Without snow our motivation is hard to keep up, but seven new candidates have kept us busy and motivated! Ellen Clegg, Dave Brown, Drew Trainor, and Jessica Rubin are now full-fledged Patrollers! We were able to find snow for Marianne Jakus and Jonathan Shefftz to start their Nordic Skills testing and hope to be able to upgrade them to Patrollers soon.

Yes, Bo and Sue have been burning lots of gas and getting to see more of the mountain than their homes. During the OEC Final, Larry Pottebaum, Bob Presutti, and Bill Beardsley volunteered to act as evaluators and patients which made the final a great success for all involved! Thanks!!

New for this year are six Kenwood TK 380 radios. They are much (much!) lighter and compact than the current Motorolas we had been using. The new sled has been fitted with rollers and a plywood cover so it's easier to store items and load a patient. It didn't need painting this year!

**For future planning: the Toboggan Test will be held on Saturday, April, 29<sup>th</sup>, 12:30pm at the mountain. Our Camp Wiyaka Weekend will be September 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, and Fall Refresher is scheduled for October 14<sup>th</sup> (OEC) and 15<sup>th</sup> (CPR and On the Hill).** Yes, there will be changes to CPR this year, change is the constant! Hopefully all will get the needed materials by mail before the 15th. There will be a few events at the mountain this summer and fall that will need First Aid Room manning. In June an adventure race is planned, and there is always the WMASS HS Cross Country Race in November.

Clean your skis *now*.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**2006 – 2007 Season**

**Patrol Representative – Tom Deam**

**Assistant Patrol Rep – Bob Duris**

**Patrol Secretary – Bill Schweikert**

**Patrol Treasurer – Sue Menick**

**Past Patrol Rep – Bill Osborn**

**Patrol Liaison – Bill Gabriel**

## A NOT SO SNOWY SEASON

by Joannie Duris

Those of us who have been around the mountain a few times can remember those winter wonderland seasons with weeks of deep, fresh powder and later, beautifully groomed crusty New England snow. But we can also remember those dismal years when Northfield couldn't open for skiing at all.

If you blinked, or went on vacation, you missed last season – but the mountain was actually open for 12 days of skiing. There was free skiing on two of those days when only the front fields were open.

For those of you who like statistics: the mountain had a total of 605 visitors – 503 skiers and 102 snowshoers. And one positive outcome of an abbreviated season is that there were no injuries reported.

[WWW.NMNSP.ORG](http://WWW.NMNSP.ORG)

**Don't forget to check our website for the latest patrol news and dates of upcoming courses and events.**

**If you don't remember the user name and password for entering the 'patrol room', contact Bill Schweikert at: [webmaster@nmnsp.org](mailto:webmaster@nmnsp.org)**

**IT'S A MAD, MAD RACE** (*continued from page one*) pull-tab on my upper cuff's laces. The skiing started with some intermediate groomers and then dropped onto a very long, ungroomed, natural-snow intermediate pitch. At first we were treated to a few inches of wet, gloppy snow from the previous night, then rain-softened snow, then ...*hey, where's the snow?* I quickly learned how to straightline snow patches interspersed with grass, leaves, mud, rocks, and open running water. The sign had warned 'Thin Cover', but that was accurate only in the sense that Homer Simpson has thinning hair.

I rounded the corner and there attaching skins was ...McLean.

I felt completely exhausted, but somehow still strong. I had finished off my water supply, and was even tempted by some deep puddles, but tried to encourage myself with the thought that the faster I went, the sooner I'd be able to guzzle water at the finish. I sprinted ahead of McLean, fell behind, then sprinted ahead again. I established a gap between us, which seemed to stay constant at first, but as the switchbacks became tighter on the work road we were ascending I couldn't tell if I was extending my lead or if the gap was only the length of each switchback. I reached the skin>ski transition at Sugarbush South/Lincoln Peak, then pushed off in a briefly blinding snow-sleet-something-storm. Without goggles or even sunglasses, I quickly learned how to ski moguls with my eyelids 95% shut.

The terrain became groomed. After all sorts of odd zigs and zags, plus one short uphill, I tucked through the finish. As the results show:

Shefftz 2:46, McLean 2:50. Yes, that's right, I beat ...  
...her.

Polly McLean. Mrs. Polly Samuels-McLean. But hey, she's really quite fast. Living in Park City and doing dawn patrol before work probably helps with that.

Check out just how mad a race it was at the following sites:

**Course map:** [www.life-link.com/sb\\_mrg\\_courseinfo.htm](http://www.life-link.com/sb_mrg_courseinfo.htm)

**Race photos:** [www.bratina.com/gallery/mrg\\_rally](http://www.bratina.com/gallery/mrg_rally)

**Sugarbush/Mad River Glen Race results:**

[www.ussma.org/results/Sugarbush\\_Race\\_Results\\_06-Final.pdf](http://www.ussma.org/results/Sugarbush_Race_Results_06-Final.pdf)

**Current standings in the Life-Link® Series:**

[www.life-link.com/series\\_pts\\_june.htm](http://www.life-link.com/series_pts_june.htm)

*The next issue of the Rattlebone will be published in June. Please get all articles, information, dates, etc. to Joannie Duris by June 15<sup>th</sup>.*

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