

VOCene #20 - Jan 9, 2007

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I. Letter From the Editor

Every time I see a picture of some extreme skier hucking a 15+m cliff or nailing a 55 degree couloir at 100km/hr, I am always impressed at their skill and lack of brains. It is truly amazing how good skiers are and what they are willing to risk for 'fun'. While I was stumbling around on the Internet looking for skiing related quotes, I found a web page dedicated to telemark injuries. The web page reported the following table. All numbers have the units of injury days out of 1000 ski days.

Level of Telemarker	Injury Rate	Knee Injury Rate
Beginner	10.4	3.9
Intermediate	9.2	1.9
Advanced	9.8	3.6
Expert	8.2	2.5
Extreme	5.0	0.4

Notice that the better skier you are, the less likely you are to get injured. An extreme skier is 50% as likely to get injured as a rank beginner. The obvious argument is that extreme skiers are more likely to have more severe injury when they do get injured. However, I consider knee injuries to be severe, and extreme skiers are one tenth as likely to bust a knee cap compared to a beginner. When you think about it, what is more likely, breaking at least one knee (among other things) after catching a tip and cartwheeling down a couloir at 100km/hr for 300 vertical meters, or awkwardly stumbling off a chair lift? Apparently, the chair lift is what you really should be scared of.

So next time you see a beginner falling all over the place on a gentle powder run, be twice as impressed as when you saw that skier huck a 24m cliff. Apparently, the extreme skier is the safer of the two. I'm not recommending beginners go and start hucking 24m cliffs, stupidity doesn't make you a better skier. People know their limits, but like skiing, they have to learn where those limits are. Logically, the better you are, the better you know your limits and the less likely you are to cross them with the resulting disaster ready for delivery.

People don't give beginners enough credit and give too much credit to the 'ard' men and women advertisers pay good money to photograph. In reality, it is the beginner who is the bigger risk taker.

II. News

The ACC is having a Monthly meeting and slide show called "DOWN UNDER AND TOP UP" by Graham Rowbotham. It includes pictures and stories from rock climbing in Australia to the South Peak of Mt. Walsh, Yukon (possibly the highest unclimbed peak in North America). It will be Tuesday, January 23 at 7:30pm at Floral Hall, Vandusen Gardens, West 37th and Oak St, Vancouver

Dan is organizing a Photo competition. All submissions are going to be on-line via the photo gallery on the VOC web page. Details are still in the works, but start selecting your prize winning images and start posting pictures on the VOC photo gallery.

The new shovels and probes should be in the gear room by the end of the week.

III. Upcoming Trips

1) Winter Long Hike

When: Jan 13-14

Where: Seymour

Wiki: http://www.ubc-voc.com/wiki/Winter_Longhike

Everything is different when you go into the back country in the winter; that's why there is Winter Longhike. An introductory trip for winter camping. This is a big trip (~35 souls) with lots of keener's who want to get out, learn some new skills, and sleep in their very own snow shelter while still managing to have fun too. It's an easy, beginner friendly trip, so if you've never even seen snow before you can still have a good time. Other fun activities that often happen at Winter Longhike are a cooking competition, sing along's, costume competitions, and the occasional great ski run on Sunday.

Trip meeting is Wednesday at 6pm in the clubroom

2) Tele-School

When: Jan 20

Where: Seymour Mountain (different part than long hike)

Wiki: http://www.ubc-voc.com/wiki/Tele_School#Dry_School

This is an informal day of telemark ski instruction at Seymour mountain. Students pay for their instructor's lift ticket. Looking for both instructors and students, please sign up on the wiki. There will be a dry school on Jan 17th at 6pm in the club room. A gear master will be present at the meeting to lend out gear and instructors will be available to help fit gear.

3) Avalanche Course

When: Jan 27-28

Where: Usually two nights in a class room, one day on the North Shore and one day at Whistler

Wiki: http://www.ubc-voc.com/wiki/Avalanche_course

The sign-up deadline is January 12th, so hurry in to sign up. This is a great deal

on an commercial course and should be considered a prerequisite for back-country travel in winter conditions.

IV. Trip Reports

1) Phelix Hut

A few days of some great skiing in the mountains is by far the best way to say good bye to 2006 and say hey to 2007. Interesting points include running almost naked around the hut in waste deep snow (we had the decency to cover our feet), drinking all of the booze the night before new years, no one dying, boulder problems in the hut, and a few summits of local mountains.

Quote of the Week: "Fear... the right and necessary counterweights to that courage which urges men skyward, and protects them from self-destruction."
-Heinrich Harrer

CONTRIBUTIONS to the VOCene are welcome. Please send all inquires or additions to: vocene@ubc-voc.com.

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(This is no joke, no wimpy confirmation screens will appear, so don't mess around)

Varsity Outdoor Club