Let's toast 8 amazing skiers & visionaries who made Maine the way skiing should be.
Masters of Ceremonies
Greg Sweetser • Dave Irons • John Williams • John Christie

Class of 2009
Tom Bennett
Byron “Bud” Dow
Ted Curtis
John Roderick
Herbert L. “Herb” Adams
John Litchfield
Sarah Billmeier
Les Otten

MISSION
The mission of the Maine Ski Hall of Fame is to recognize those skiers, who through their efforts and achievements have brought distinction to Maine skiing. Some of these skiers made their mark in competition. Others were founders who built the sport into a way of life for so many Mainers. Still more were teachers who led countless skiers and competitors into our sport. Some had an intense impact on local skiers while others gained prominence on an international scale. Thanks to these skiers Maine has an industry that is a vital part of the economy, not only in the mountains, but throughout the state.

It is to recognize the importance of skiing to Maine and its citizens that the Maine ski Hall of Fame has been formed. By enshrining those men and women who founded and built the sport in Maine, competitors who brought prominence to Maine skiing, their coaches and mentors, and others who have made significant contributions, we shall create a permanent record of their endeavors and achievements. By doing this we shall preserve this history for those to follow, that they may understand the great achievements of these individuals.

STATEMENT

Congratulations!
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Class of 2007:
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Class of 2008:
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Tom Bennett’s first ski runs were on Chebeague Island as a kid on an old pair of 7 foot skis with only toe straps., with only 75 feet or less of vertical drop stopping before going into the bay was quite a trick on a fast track. He remembered the white Army surplus skis becoming available at Tommy’s Hardware in Portland for only $10.00 a pair at that time.

There were few lifts and he climbed for his runs on local hills in greater Portland and led other skiers on trips, and eventually up Mount Washington to ski Tuckerman Ravine each spring. When Pleasant Mountain opened, Tom and his friends sidestepped up to pack the slopes, using rope tows after the new snow was made skiable for beginners.

In the forties reliable transportation made skiing inaccessible for many would be skiers, so Tom rallied the support of friends and the local YMCA to organize weekly bus trips to Pleasant Mountain. The buses, which were always full left after church each Sunday morning. This led to the creation of the Down East Ski Club of which Tom is recognized as the founding father.

He played a key role in the purchase of an acre of land to the east of the parking lot at Pleasant Mountain where the club built a dormitory to sleep 30 people. He was instrumental in planning and building the lodge that still houses club member families at what is now Shawnee Peak.

Tom served for 25 years as a member of the National Ski Patrol at the mountain and when he wasn’t patrolling he was volunteering for duty at races, hiking Pleasant and the 4,000 footers in the White Mountains and other events. As a volunteer he helped organize and run the annual Down East Ski Club ski sale, and annual Warren Miller movies, all important parts of a funding club.

One of his most cherished achievements was the creation of the Russ Haggett Scholarship Fund in 1991. Each year Tom works on the Russ Haggett Memorial Race which raises money for the fund. The fund now provides two $1,000 scholarships to Lake Region High School students each year.

In addition to alpine skiing at Pleasant Mountain, Tuckerman Ravine and annual trips out west, Tom was also a tireless cross country skier as well, receiving the USSA Kodak 1,000 miles Award for skiing that mileage in a single season all of which was in Cumberland and Oxford counties on their snowmobile trails, lakes and ponds. Except for a time as a navigator in the Merchant Marine in the mid forties and a recall to Navy duty during the Korean War, Tom Bennett has been skiing and promoting his sport since the forties. He and other USN personnel spent Christmas of 1952 skiing at Chamonix – Mt. Blanc and New Years in the French Maritime Alps, in 1953.

Wherever he has been, Tom Bennett has been a devoted skier working to introduce others to the sport and supporting the competitors, officiating at races and volunteering for whatever needed to be done at Pleasant Mountain. This lifetime given to skiing has earned Tom Bennett a place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Bud Dow took up skiing as a teenager after reading an article about the sport. By the mid-thirties he was racing in events around New England including one race on Mount Washington where a bad fall resulted in an 8 hour rescue and 11 broken bones. It didn’t slow him down. Determined to become a better skier Dow became an instructor and was certified by PSIA in 1939 while working for the Hannes Schneider Ski School at Mount Cranmore.

At the start of World War II, Bud joined the Navy but those old injuries prevented him from passing the physical so as a licensed pilot he was hired by the Navy to train cadets in Pittsfield, Maine. At the war’s end he returned to his native Portland to work for Edwards & Walker Co. selling hardware and sporting goods at wholesale. In 1948, he returned to Pittsfield as a sales representative as the company expanded north. Before the war he had given ski lessons on local hills in the Portland area and he continued to ski with his family.

In the fall of 1954 he and fellow skier Jack Baxter wanted a place to ski in Pittsfield and looked to the only hill of any size in the area, a 140 foot hump called the Pinnacle. They got permission from the elderly lady who owned the land to build the slope and within ten weeks the Kiwanis Ski Slope (For the $500 the club donated) was ready for operation. That was left to the newly formed Pinnacle Ski Club with Dow as its first president.

From that time on until his early death in 1979, Bud Dow and his club provided instruction for all levels and free lessons for kids. A competitor himself, to encourage competition for all ages he set up season ending races. Buying trophies and ribbons and providing stop watches he trained others to assist and the races continue to this day.

By the late fifties Bud was coaching the ski team at Maine Central Institute and he became a race official working as course setter, jumping judge and referee. Becoming certified as an alpine official he worked several positions in the 1967 NCAA’s at Sugarloaf and again at the Tall Timber Classic World Cup Downhills in 1971.

Bud Dow did it all, a competitor in the early 30’s, a ski shop operator in the mid 30’s, a slope creator, a nordic center developer, and most of all a teacher of children for more than 40 years. Today the Pinnacle hut is a memorial and a plaque on a granite marker reads “Bud Dow, 1916-1979, Founder, Builder, President, Pinnacle Ski Club, He Loved Kids-Skiing-Building.”

Thanks to his efforts thousands of kids learned to ski at Pinnacle. A life dedicated to skiing and kids of his town and state have earned Byron “Bud” Dow a place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Ted Curtis started a four decade coaching career immediately after graduating from the University of Maine in 1923. His first position was as teacher and coach at Lee Academy where he coached cross country, track, winter sports, baseball and tennis. He organized the first winter carnival at Lee, which became an annual event and evolved into the Maine State Skiing Championships. During his five years there his Lee winter sports teams won four state championships and his cross country teams won four state interscholastic titles, establishing his reputation as a winning coach in multiple sports.

The next stop for the Freeport native was Caribou High School in 1928 where he led his winter sports teams to a pair of state titles including major victories over Lee Academy.

In 1930 Ted became Faculty Manager of Athletics and the first ski coach at the University of Maine. In three decades his ski teams were perennial state champions winning 23 state championships and rarely missing qualifying for the eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association’s Senior Division Championship each winter which was limited to the top ten college teams in the East.

One of his best ski teams was in 1961, a group that finished fourth in the East and sixth nationally. One key mark of a successful coach is the athletes he develops and Ted Curtis had a number who went on to achieve at higher levels. Andover’s Charlie Akers won the NCAA cross country championships in 1961 and earned spots on two Olympic teams and Rumford’s Bob Pidacks competed in the 1952 Olympics. Rod Elliott, captain of the 1936-1937 ski teams won the Montreal Open Ski Jumping title twice.

In addition to his coaching duties and other responsibilities as Manager of Athletics at the University Ted found the time to be active in the development of the Penobscot Valley Ski Club’s Bald Mountain Ski Area where one of the slopes was named “Curtis Bowl”. He made sure all of his ski team members were also members of PVSC and the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association. The addition of the team members made it possible for PVSC to meet the USEASA membership requirements enabling the club to hold USEASA sanctioned races.

Curtis was also active in the Maine Intercollegiate Athletic Association, the New England Conference on Intercollegiate Athletics, the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association, the Yankee Conference, and the YMCA. He was a “friend” of Sugarloaf and carried his support for Maine winter recreation to the Maine State Legislature after his retirement from the University in 1961. His achievements have been recognized with numerous awards including the Maine Black Bear Award, the Bangor Daily News Sports Award, and in 1986 the Penobscot Valley Ski Club Award for his “Outstanding Contribution to Skiing”. His greatest legacy may be the large number of his athletes and students who went into coaching and teaching carrying his values of loyalty, honesty and sportsmanship to schools in Maine and throughout the nation. This lifetime of devotion to the sport has earned Ted Curtis a rightful place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
The University of Maine Department of Athletics congratulates...

Mr. Theodore S. Curtis and his Family

Faculty Manager of Athletics ~ 1930-1966
Head Ski Coach ~ 1930-1961

Go Black Bears!

Ted Curtis

It was an honor to compete against your teams.

Bowdoin Ski Team
1955-1959

Bruce Chalmers • John Christie • Charlie Jackson
Charlie Long • Ray “Bucky” Owen
Few skiers have had a competitive career as long as John Roderick. As a teenager in the 1920’s he joined the Chisolm Ski Club as a charter member of the junior organization, beginning a competitive career representing that club for 68 years. Starting his career as a ski jumper his first documented event was as a jumper in the Rumford Winter Carnival in 1925. During seven decades the Rumford native piled up victories and high finishes at local, New England, National and North American events.

Although he started as a jumper and competed in alpine races as well, Roderick made an early decision to focus on cross country and that discipline received his full efforts. In 1940 the Rumford native earned a class A rating in his chosen event which he maintained through age 57. After that he competed successfully in class B and eventually in class C, running in 10-12 races each season and sometimes more, earning a reputation for finishing every race he started.

Through his career he won at least 77 trophies, medals and bowls along with numerous citations, mostly in cross country, but prior to World War II a number were in Nordic combined. His victories came in Maine, New England, Eastern and North American competition.

Along with his competitive activity, Roderick was busy supporting the sport as an official, serving as Chief of Course in the 1950 World Championships, moved to Rumford due to lack of snow in Lake Placid. He also worked as an aid to Chummy Broomhall on the cross country courses at Squaw Valley, California in the 1960 Olympics.

John was also involved in course design and layout, designing and actually building most of the original 18 kilometer Chisholm ski Club race course that was the site of those World Championships in 1950 and many more races over the years including national championships and NCAA’s. He was also a tireless worked maintaining the trails.

Giving back to his sport, John contributed by serving as president and treasurer of Chisholm Ski Club, and as a race/meet official, Chief of Hill for jumping, Chief of Race and Chief of Course for cross country events, always available wherever and whenever a helping hand was needed.

Hundreds of cross country skiers remember John Roderick as the coach and mentor when they were kids learning the sport at the club. Among those he worked with were Olympians, Chummy Broomhall, Bob Pidacks, Jim Miller and Jack Lufkin.

As a competitor John was active into his 80’s. Although he claimed to have retired from racing at 75, that was only from the 50 K races. He ran 10 and 15 K races for another seven years.

His competition career would be more than enough for most, but the service to other skiers and the sport through a lifetime has earned John Roderick a place in the Maine ski Hall of Fame.
Growing up in Rumford, a place known for its skiers, it was natural that Herb Adams took to skiing, developing his skills on local hills and cross country trails. He attended high school at Gould Academy where he excelled in all four events. In his first year he placed second in the 1952 Eastern Interscholastic Ski Jumping Championships. In 1953 he was Maine X-C champion, placed 3rd in the New England Interscholastic X-C Championships and won the Eastern Interscholastic X-C title. In his final year, 1954, Adams led his team as Captain to the State Championship winning all four events on his way to Ski Meister honors.

His success in high school earned a scholarship to ski and play baseball for the University of New Hampshire where he became a certified Class A ski jumper. He was named ski team captain in 1958 and in 1960 was invited to the Olympic ski jumping tryouts in Lake Placid. From 1961 to 1964 he coached skiing at Lake Placid High School before returning to Maine to coach skiing at Stephens/Rumford High School.

Adams coaching success matched his success as a competitor. In 1965 his team placed 3rd in Maine and 2nd in New England and in 1966 won the New England Championships. The following year the team was 2nd in Maine and 3rd in New England. His winning ways led to his being named Eastern junior National Jumping Coach at Duluth, MN, where his eastern team won the title. From 1968 his Rumford ski teams had a 3rd, two 2nds and a 1st in Maine high school championships and two 2nds and a 1st in New England. The success of any coach is measured by the success of the skiers they coach as they move on in competition and the list is impressive, Gary Giberson, Buddy Fisher, Jack Lufkin, Fran Lutick, Lee Buotte, Billy Chenard, Avery Caldwell, Scott Broomhall, Tom Grace, Dickie Giberson, Ruel (Major) Lefebvre, Roger Hamanne, Larry Gillis and Greg Cunningham. All skiers who skied in Junior Nationals, Junior Olympics or Olympics.

Following is retirement from teaching and coaching Adams continued his devotion to skiing volunteering at events throughout the country, serving in timing, starting, hill preparation, jump marking, course preparation and stadium setup. The list over more than 30 years starts with the 1976 NCAA Cross Country Championships at his home Chisolm Ski Club in Rumford and continues through 2007 where he worked at no less than six ski events.

Along the way were stops at the 1980 Olympics, World Cup Ski Jumping, Masters ski Jumping, National Biathlon Championships, US National XC Championships, Junior Olympics, 2002 Winter Olympics and many more. This Rumford native has made an impact at every level of competition and continues to devote his winters to his favorite sport. His dedication and years of work have earned Herb Adams a rightful place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Growing up in Auburn, John Litchfield, started skiing at age four and by high school was an accomplished skier. He was one of Zeke Dwelley’s earliest skiers and was a member of the Edward Little ski team that won the 1934 Maine Winter Sports Championships. In the early 1930’s he competed in all disciplines, jumping, cross country and alpine winning in all events, honored by the state of Maine by being named the best junior skier in the state.

John’s success continued at Dartmouth where he earned an economics degree while winning awards in ski events. In 1937 he was a member of the first U.S. Alpine Ski Team at the Pan American Games in Chile. He was then chosen to be a member of the U.S. FIS team competing for the World Championships. He was named to the U.S. Olympic Ski Team but missed out when those games were canceled by World War II.

From 1940 to 1942, Litchfield was a ski instructor at Sun Valley, Idaho before joining the 10th Mountain Division to train at Camp Hale in Colorado. Captain John Litchfield served in the famed mountain division from 1942 until 1945 earning a Bronze Star during the Italian Campaign.

Following the war John returned to Colorado where he became one of the original incorporators of Aspen. Along with Freidl Pfeiffer and Percy Rideout, he started the Aspen Ski School where he became a co-director and he built and operated the famous Red Onion Restaurant in Aspen. In 1945-46 he served on the Denver Chamber of Commerce Committee to develop winter sports in Colorado. Throughout all of this he continued to compete, in 1947 placing first in slalom, seventh in downhill and third in Alpine Combined at the championships of the Southern Rocky Mountain ski Association.

Leaving Colorado john returned to Sun Valley, Idaho where he progressed from ski instructor to chief instructor, and to Executive Director of the Sun Valley Ski School. That phase of his life was interrupted by a recall to active duty in the Army during the Korean War. On his return to Colorado after that war he resumed his ski racing in the Senior Masters series winning nine races, and adding a pair of second pace finishes along with three third places.

His skiing skills were put to use by Hollywood when he performed as a stand in for Jimmy Stewart in the movie Mortal Storm. In that film he skied down a mountain chased by machine gun firing Nazis.

Throughout his skiing and professional careers John has volunteered his time and efforts serving as president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the National Association of the 10th Mountain Division, a national association board members and a board member of the 10th Mountain Hut System. He has been honored by induction in 2001 into the Maine Sports Hall of Fame and in 2002 into the Colorado Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the U.S. Ski Hall of Fame. This lifetime of devotion to skiing has earned John Litchfield a place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Just six years after she first put on skis, Sarah Billmeier was standing on the podium at the Paralympics and that day in Albertville, France she was on the top of that podium. That gold medal in the downhill in 1992 was the first of three gold medals as she went on to win the super G and giant slalom at those games at the age of 14.

The spunky redhead lost a leg above the knee to cancer at the age of five and three years later took up skiing. Immediately taken by the freedom of the sport she was soon in competition with the downhill her favorite race. She started the 1992 season on the US disabled “C” team but performed so well in the early season that she was named to the Olympic team in the LW 2 class (single leg amputee or three tracker) where she won her first Olympic gold medals.

A year later Billmeier won her first national titles, grabbing gold in DH, SG, GS and SL in the LW 2 class and won the SG and GS at the Hafjell Alpine Cup in Lillehammer, Norway, getting a look at the hill where she would compete in the Paralympics in 1994. Her training at Green Mountain Valley School in Vermont included racing against her able bodied team mates and playing soccer there and when at home against her three brothers. One exercise at the school is for athletes to climb Appalachian Gap up past Mad River Glen on bicycles. Her coach excused her but she made the trip anyway. Back at Lillehammer in 1994 Sarah added another pair of Olympic Gold Medals in DH and SG. In 1998, she ran her total to seven with wins in DH and SL in Nagano, Japan.

Between Olympics the Yarmouth skier added World Championship titles in DH, GS and SL in 1996 and again in 2000. After Lillehammer Billmeier enrolled at Dartmouth and for the next six years combined skiing with preparation for medical school. Graduating cum laude she put her skis aside to enter Harvard Medical school. In 2006 she completed medical school and entered residency to specialize in surgery. Today Sarah Billmeier MD is in the middle of that program soon to enter the field as a surgeon.


During her eight years on the US Disabled Team she won 8 Olympic Gold Medals, 6 World Championship titles and 10 US National Championship crowns, the best record of any Maine skier ever. Determination and a willingness to work toward her goals brought Sarah Billmeier to the top of the ski world and in life, earning her a rightful place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Les Otten began skiing as a grammar school student and was totally hooked by the time he got into high school. At Ithaca College he took the next step getting his first ski area job as a ski instructor at Greek Peak. Along with a friend he actually tried to build a ski area. When that didn’t work out he wrote a paper on the effort which earned an A+ in a marketing class. Following graduation he entered Killington’s management training program, little knowing that would lead to his future in Maine skiing.

In 1972 Killington’s parent company bought a struggling Sunday River and the 23 year old trainee was sent to Maine as an assistant manager. A year later he was named general manager. Under Sherburne a few improvements were made, top to bottom snowmaking and base lodge expansion. But Les Otten had bigger ideas which he laid out on topographical maps on the wall opposite his desk. By 1980 he was frustrated with the lack of growth where he saw unlimited potential and he went to Sherburne and said, “If you’re not going to do anything with it sell it to me.” They did and one of the greatest growth periods in the history of skiing was underway.

He then owned a ski area with one double chair lift, three T-bars, and a poma lift attracting 32,000 skiers a year to ski on 70 acres of trails. To raise money for a chair at the new south ridge base area every piece of scrap metal on the property was gathered up and sold. That and a small loan got the lift and small lodge at South Ridge.

From that year forward Sunday River recorded annual growth in trails, lifts, lodging, base facilities and most important, skier visits. By the end of his first decade of ownership skier visits were close to 400,000, number one in Maine and by the mid nineties they were nearly 600,000 second only to Killington in New England. The tiny ski area had spread over eight peaks anchored by a pair of hotels, three base lodges, a ski dorm, on mountain lodge, 18 lifts including four high speed quads, 126 trails and glades and one of the most powerful snowmaking systems in skiing.

This incredible growth was the result of the vision of one man who put his dreams on the wall and made them happen. Les had a simple idea. Make sure you deliver a great skiing product. To that end every time a lift and trails were created, snowmaking and grooming was increased. It also took creative marketing, everything from dumping snow on the Boston Common to inviting the Legends of Freestyle to a big spring event. The list of innovations at Sunday River is too long for this space, but the resort today is all the proof needed of his impact on Maine skiing. Les Otten devoted more than half his life to building Maine’s biggest ski resort and has earned a place in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame.
Congratulations Les Otten and Maine Ski Hall of Fame Class of 2009
The Class of 2009, our seventh, runs the membership in the Maine Ski Hall of Fame to 65 individuals and one couple. They represent every aspect of skiing in Maine and this year’s class also includes a wide variety of skiers.

We have Tom Bennett who started one of the state’s oldest ski clubs, Sarah Billmeier our first disabled ski team member who has won more Olympic gold medals than any other Maine skier, Bud Dow who built and maintained a community ski area as a volunteer for more than 40 years, John Litchfield who starred as a competitor and started two of the country’s most prestigious ski schools, Les Otten whose impact on the growth of Maine skiing exceeds all others, Herb Adams who did all things in Nordic skiing from competing to officiating, Ted Curtis who had 30 years of success coaching at the University of Maine, and John Roderick whose competitive cross-country career spanned over 60 years.

These skiers all share a passion for our sport that led them to contribute greatly to the good of the sport here in Maine. Whether they helped it grow by bringing publicity with their athletic feats, taught others to ski, or built ski areas, all played a role in making Maine a better place to ski. They join those who have been recognized before and as you read their biographies, you will be reading a history of Maine skiing, some recent some past, but all an important part of the sport that has become a way of life in Maine.

Thanks to the support you have given to the Maine Ski Hall of Fame, we now have a home at the Ski Museum of Maine which has moved from Farmington to Kingfield. There you will find a plaque with the names of all seven classes honored by induction in our Hall of Fame. Copies of all the previous programs are also there so you can see the stories of the earlier inductees.

We would like you to take the time to read these stories for two reasons. First they are interesting accounts of the accomplishments of fascinating skiers and more important they may remind you of someone you know or know of who has a similar story and deserves to be honored in this way. Those of us who serve on the committee know of many but not all. Check the web site www.skimuseumofmaine.org to learn how to nominate a candidate.

Finally, as you read this program, take note of the sponsors whose ads pay for this and help to finance the museum. Without their support this evening and the museum would be impossible. Dave Irons, Chairman, Maine Ski Hall of Fame Committee.

Best wishes to my friends and colleagues in the ski industry for a successful year.
- Les Otten
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Congratulations to the distinguished Class of 2009. Each inductee, in his or her own way, has contributed to the wonderful Maine skiing legacy that we all share and are working to preserve.

The Museum Directors are all owed our considerable gratitude for the work they’ve done since our last gathering in 2008, and for the long hours each of them has devoted to furthering the cause.

You should know that the entire Board, besides meeting regularly as a full Board, and as sub-committees as needed, devoted an entire day in June at a Retreat to grapple with the increasing number of issues associated with a growing and thriving enterprise, and to develop some long-range strategies to assure success.

Out of that Retreat came an ambitious and well-defined program focusing on, but not limited to: aggressive pursuit of increased revenue from new and existing programs; creation of an Annual Giving program about which you will hear more shortly; the identification and collection of Made in Maine artifacts; the capture of Maine skiing memories by recording and creating oral histories in the voices of notable Maine skiers; and, perhaps most important of all, having our own permanent location in Maine in a facility which we own or under very liberal lease terms.

Our ongoing programs such as the Hall of Fame; the very popular series of Fireside Chats featuring Scott Andrews, one of our Directors; and our annual Heritage Classic event have increased public interest in our activities and provided essential operating income to help sustain our undertakings.

We continue to exponentially grow our membership, and urge you to join us if you have not already done so.

Now to the biggest news of all! In response to our concerted effort to find a permanent location, and thanks to the generosity of Sugarloaf, we have moved to new, expanded quarters in downtown Kingfield, with assurance that for the next several years we will be relieved of the rent burden under which we’ve been operating for the past three.

Our Directors, and other volunteers helped make the move in September, and a Grand Opening is scheduled for Columbus Day Weekend to coincide with Sugarloaf’s Annual Homecoming.

So, enjoy the evening, join us in our ongoing activities, and plan a visit soon to the NEW Museum!

~John Christie, President

Ski Museum President John Christie, Sugarloaf President John Diller, Museum Curator Megan Roberts and board member Don Fowler in front of the Museum’s new home in Kingfield.
Sugarloaf Congratulates Maine Ski Hall of Fame Class of 2009
Congratulations

to those who have helped create
such a rich history in Maine skiing

Class of 2009

Maine Ski Hall of Fame

Maine Winter Sports Center

Celebrating 10 years of reestablishing skiing as a lifestyle in Maine