



January 2014 Edition



**Jeff Wattenmaker Scholar
James Clifford**



Ara Papazian on course at the Alpine Meadows SL

From the President's Corner...

By Mark Mirviss

Well, at least we have a little bit of new snow on the ground as I sit here writing this letter. My yard looks a bit whiter, and in a few minutes, I'll go see what the mountain looks like.

No news to anyone who is reading this, but we've have (as the PC crowd would say, me, I'd call it crappy) a challenging year regarding snow and the ability to put on races. With that said, every one of the races we have put on have been a great success. And more importantly, a ton of fun!

Our races last Friday at Heavenly Valley were held under clear skies, and with the exception of Tom Bullard, everyone seemed to have a good time. Even Tom was sporting his characteristic smile (after have his shoulder re-located into the proper place).

Congratulations to our Viva Italia winners; Linda (I hate Slalom) Crowell, and Kurt (I love Slalom) Belden. Also thanks to the race crew from Heavenly Valley and Northstar for putting on such a great race for us.

In "challenging" ski seasons such as this, I'm more than ever glad I'm a ski racer. It's in this type of season that I realize just how happy ski racing and training makes me. I've heard almost nothing but griping from my free skiing only friends, while our race training has been quite good. I've skied on a brand new pair of Slalom skis without even putting a scratch in the bases for well over a month. True, I'd rather be doing top to bottom training runs on Exhibition, but the training we're getting on Searchlight and Kangaroo has been great.

That said, I'm ready to do some powder skiing if the snow gods will it!

See you on the slopes!
Mark

Masters Injury Becomes FWM Scholarship Program Opportunity

By Sandy Hogan

Sugar Bowl Masters racer Gary Sadler turned his recent season-ending injury into an opportunity to donate to the FWM Scholarship Program. As a 62 year old newly-retired pharmaceutical executive, Gary was particularly excited about trying the speed events for the first time with the Masters program. Gary dabbled in Masters racing in the mid-70s for a few seasons during college and grad school, and then a career sidetracked his ski racing for several years, as it has for many of us. Now retired, Gary was looking forward to becoming a regular class M08 Masters weekend warrior, including the excitement of participating in the speed events. Last season Gary decided that it was time to start his comeback, skiing 30 days at Sugar Bowl, followed by a summer race camp at Timberline, Mt. Hood Oregon. He enjoyed the Mt. Hood race camp so much that he returned this November to get a jump on the season, and took a GS fall that resulted in a complicated ankle fracture, sidelining him for the season.

With both his training camp and race season cut short, Gary faced major disappointment. However, after very little thought, he decided that if he couldn't participate, he would make a contribution to the FWM Scholarship Fund of three brand new Atomic SG and DH skis and bindings that he had planned to use this season, thus helping young athletes participate. The skis had never been skied on, and were eagerly snapped up by scholarship athlete Scotty Lebel, racing FIS for Lake Tahoe Racing, and two other FIS racers from Diamond Peak and Sugar Bowl.

As a proud supporter of the FWM scholarship program, Gary is looking forward to following the progress of our scholarship award recipients. His generous donation to our Masters special program is a great example for all of us who support our younger racers. Thanks, Gary!!

Race Day Check-in

Many thanks to Diann Laing, who has graciously agreed to be our Far West Masters check-in volunteer for 2013-14. This is an essential, but much under appreciated role, and I hope you can all join us in thanking Diann for her commitment to helping us.

To help the check-in process run smoothly and get the day off to a good start Diann has a few reminders for all of us in this edition of the Forerunner.

The race day check-in station works closely with each host area in providing accurate information for establishing the day's start lists, bib numbers, and attendance. Each area requires a signed Release Form from each racer with a contact person and emergency number. You must fill one out (and I Diann needs to check for completion) or you will not start! Diann also makes a sign with the names of the day's TD and Referee; and will try to obtain a copy of the day's race schedule and party information. Also, if you have bib issues and need a temporary, Diann can assign you one, take a deposit, and at the end of the day, will collect the bib and return your deposit.

All of this happens for the whole group in about one hour of check-in time! And since Diann is a non-racer and new to Far West Masters, she does not yet know all of us by face. So please call in to the check-in table before the race, sign the Release Form, introduce yourself to Diann, and begin your race day ready to go!

Season Update

The first, and so far only, winter storm of the season rolled in late on Friday 6th December, bringing exceptionally cold temperatures, significant accumulations of new snow, and high winds to the Sierra, causing the opening races of the season on Saturday to be cancelled. Any hopes of a powder day on Saturday were dashed due to the high winds, which kept all but one lift at Mammoth closed. The storm had cleared

by Sunday and we were greeted with sunny skies and brisk temperatures at Mammoth.

The weekend schedule was adjusted to run the two GS races planned for Saturday on Sunday, rather than the scheduled SL race. The two GS races went smoothly under sunny skies, light winds, and welcome warming through the day. The racing surface held up well, with some softer snow on top slipped clear through the day and a good firm track on the lower sections of the course allowing competitors to let loose coming off the steep pitch. Piere Jeangirard took first place in the Mens open seed in both races, with Deb Lewis taking first place in both races for the Ladies open seed.

Two weeks later racing moved to Alpine Meadows where we were greeted with beautiful, warm sunny weather for both days of racing and the Alpine Meadows/Squaw Valley race department did a great job to make the best of the poor snow conditions, putting on 3 good SL races for us over two days.

Over 60 Masters races participated in each of the two races on Saturday, with nearly all returning to wrap up the weekend in the final race on Sunday. Mike Shklovski took top spot in the first race, with Ara Papazian taking the honors in races two and three. On the ladies side, Leslie Marcacci led the field in all three races.

After the break for the holidays and New Year racing resumed at heavenly for the Viva Italia. Conditions on World Cup were good and almost 60 racers enjoyed 4 challenging SL runs in sunny, almost spring like conditions. The Masters racers were joined briefly by a local bear, who seemed somewhat oblivious to the races happening only 30 yards away while it played in the snow near the edge of World Cup. During inspection for the second run the bear took advantage of a gap between skiers and crossed the race course just below Mike Braun. The Masters race, and our visitor, was covered on several local TV stations and in the Tahoe Daily Tribune. After a great day of racing John Gianotti once again hosted us for a fun after race party where this years Viva Italia trophies were

presented, with Linda Crowell winning for the Ladies and Kurt Belden winning for the Men.

Unfortunately poor snow conditions led to the Sierra at Tahoe races being cancelled and to a change of plans for the next races at Mammoth. The Downhill and Super G races originally scheduled for Mammoth have been canceled and in their place we will have three Giant Slalom races over two days (3 runs each day) Saturday the 25th and Sunday the 26th.

JEFF WATTENMAKER SCHOLARSHIP

By Sandy Hogan

The Jeff Wattenmaker scholarship is the result of one Masters racer's love of our sport, our support of young racers, and his untimely death in February, 2010. As a teenager, Jeff went night-skiing in Ohio, with one trip each year with his parents to a western resort. His love of skiing took him to Colorado, where he raced at Boulder on the B-Team, and met his Nordic-skier wife Pam. After college, they moved to the Bay Area where he worked as a programmer and where he and Pam raised two children, Owen and Gwen. Eighteen-year old Owen is a Division One racer at Steamboat Community College, and twelve-year old "G.G." has become a racer in honor of her dad.

Jeff worked hard and played hard, making time each day for one of his many sports, including water-skiing, kite-surfing, soccer, mountain-biking, and of course skiing. He and his family spent two months each winter in Squaw Valley, and he loved training with the Squaw Valley Masters whenever he was there, especially slalom. He admired the Far West Masters Scholarship Program, and the November before he died he went with other Masters and some of our young scholarship awardees to Copper. He was so impressed by the camaraderie between the Masters and the young racers that he approached Eddie with a proposal to set up an endowment for a college scholarship for

deserving racers. The result is the \$10,000 Jeff Wattenmaker Scholarship (\$2,500 per year for four years) to attend the college of the athlete's choice. The letter that accompanies this article is from James Clifford, the first racer to receive this scholarship, and who attends Middlebury College.

Far West Masters Scholarship Program News

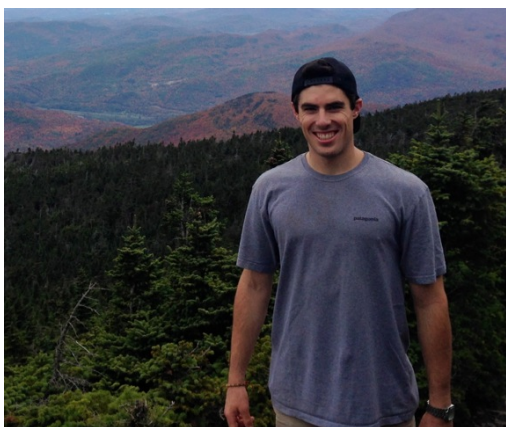
By Sandy Hogan

*Jeff Wattenmaker was a Masters racer who decided to set up a perpetual college scholarship, and his endowment allows us to award a \$10,000 college scholarship (\$2,500 per year for 4 years) to one of our outstanding young athletes. The following are excerpts from a letter from **James Clifford**, a former young scholarship winner who attends Middlebury College with the help of the Jeff Wattenmaker scholarship.*

"Thank you for your generous support...the Wattenmakers' and the Far West Masters support from the last 5 years has had real impact on my development as a student and an athlete."

"I am returning to Middlebury as a "Senior Feb," with 1.5 years left, graduating in February 2015. My time at Middlebury has been extraordinary. I finished last semester with a 4.0, raising my overall GPA to 3.81 and my major GPA to 3.92. I've spent most of my time taking classes in my major and minor, Economics and Spanish,...also...classes like Sociology of American Religion, Film Comedy, and Intro to Western Music."

"This past year...I ended up with multiple offers and chose to work at salesforce.com as a sales intern in San Francisco...The manager of the sales intern program told me that I was the best intern that they've had and gave me a returning offer for next summer. I'm excited to head back to salesforce in the summer and look to earn a full-time offer ...after I graduate from Middlebury the following winter."



“Ski racing this year could not have been better. I brought my SL points from 53 down to 34 and even scored a 29 at the end of the season. I’ve put on 10 lbs. of mass this summer and just came back from 2 great weeks of training in Chile where I was 5th in the second run of one of the SL races where 3 of the 4 guys ahead of me had raced World Cup. Things are looking up and I look to start in the NCAA carnival races this year for the first time.”

“On top of a great year of academics, internships, and ski racing, I enjoyed some fun, new additions to my social life. Last spring, I joined the college’s Spiritual Choir... and it was so fun to try something new like that. Last year I was also president and treasurer of an 18 person social house where we held three fantastic student concerts. In the fall we hosted 200 students for an outdoor, open-mic student concert that was followed by a professional, Vermont based band. In the winter we jammed our living room with 80 students who came to watch Middlebury’s first rap battle. In the spring we co-hosted over 300 students for an outdoor pig roast and student concert. This year, I am president of a new social house that aims to promote outdoor activity amongst the local youth...”

“Middlebury and college ski racing have been absolutely amazing and both are setting me up very well for life after school. Thank you for your generosity and for helping to provide me with these wonderful opportunities.”

Thank you, James Clifford

Open class or Age class ?

If you are in the top 10 men, or top 5 ladies and qualify for the Open class, but decide that you would like to race in your age class rather than the Open, please remember to notify the referee of your intention to opt out after the first run. In the case of speed events you can opt out of the open class after your run, but please do so as promptly as possible to allow the race to be scored.

Bring a Friend

Please remember that we are always looking for new racers to join us in the Far Wet Masters. We all enjoy our ski racing, and we greatly appreciate the support we get from all of the ski areas that we race at.

In order to continue being able to organize these great events it is important that we have a critical mass of racers. We have a great core of regular racers but we can all benefit from new racers to join us in this sport we love, adding to the competition and to the companionship and friendship we have.

If you bring a new racer to one of our races we will waive your entry fees for that race, and we are also able to have the USSA weekend racer fees waived for you guest, not just for one weekend, but for two.

Please remember that for any racers attending a race for the first time, and taking advantage of the USSA weekend registration option, you must have details of your medical insurance with you in order to be able to compete.

The Forerunner

Have you moved ? Please let us know. Send your new address, phone number and email information to:

Marcie Pettigrew

P.O. Box 7181
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Or email membership@farwestmasters.org

Your submissions or photos to this publication are always welcome. Please send articles and/or photos to Hamish Butler,
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