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GEAR TRENDS

WINTER OUTDOOR 2006

Volume 4, Issue 1

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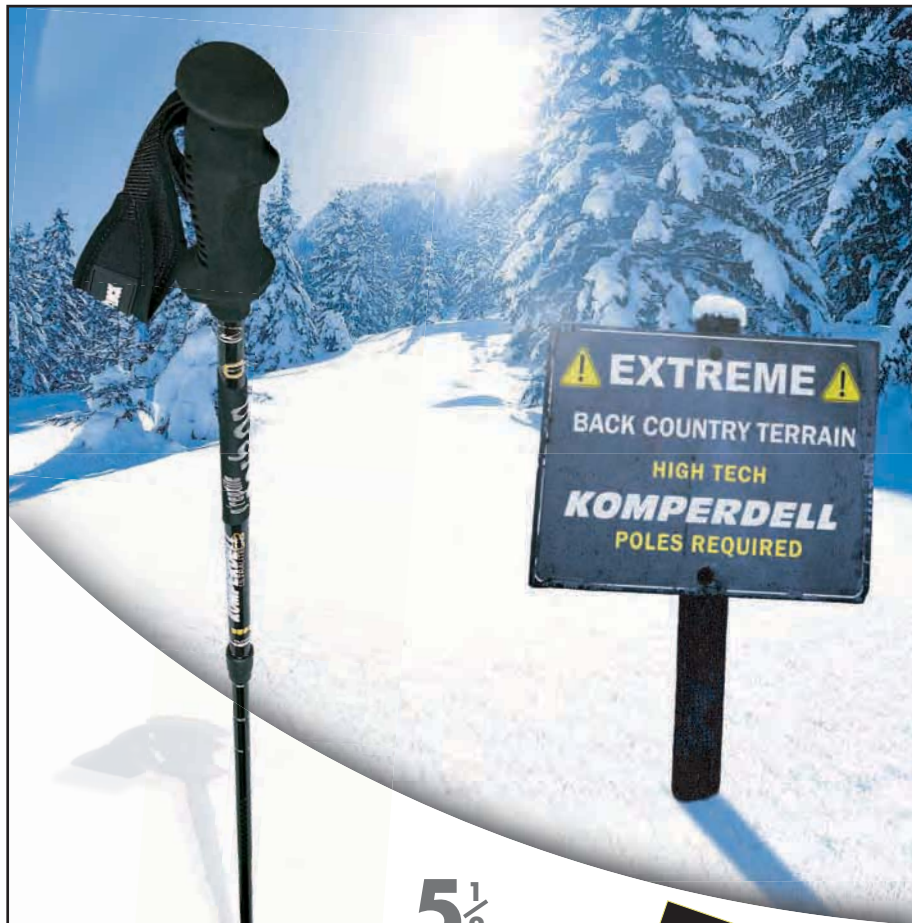
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feature

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After witnessing the devastating results of events like 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, manufacturers and retailers need to focus now more than ever on preparing their businesses to survive a future calamity.

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There's plenty to talk about in the tele world this season with exciting developments in bindings.

24 GO DEEP | SNOWSHOES

Snowshoe manufacturer R&D has been in overdrive for 2006, revamping bindings and colors and, in some cases, overhauling entire lines.

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Hangtags offer handy information for overwhelmed sales staff—or neglected customers. Are yours getting the job done?

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Equipment improvements are drawing more thrill-seekers into the backcountry, many of whom are complacent to the dangers of avalanches. GearTrends® looks at safety equipment and life-saving gear.

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It's stimulating times for sports drinks, bars and gels as makers add a dash of caffeine and other supposed uplifting ingredients to recipes. Get the low-down on what they are and what they do.

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Identity theft is a rampant, and costly, problem in today's society. What is your company doing to safeguard your personal information?

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Finding the right fit is a challenge for women who fall outside standard sizing. The debate ensues whether apparel-makers are missing an opportunity, or if there really is no demand.

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New season, same debate: What's the future of Nordic skiing, and what will it take to prosper? Plus, a look at high-adrenaline Nordic Jibbing.

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Glove designers head back to their drawing boards to make a better-fitting glove for women. Plus, experts weight in on welding technology and if it's a viable manufacturing process for gloves.

64 NO BOUNDARIES | SKIWEAR

Is the alpine ski market out of reach for the outdoor industry? Some apparel companies already successfully cater to the front-country crowd, and are hoping retailers can find the same success.

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Goggles are big business—here's the critical information you need to understand and sell them effectively.

**NORDIC MARKET TAKES A TURN****54**

DEPARTMENTS

» PUBLISHERS' CORNER

Think twice about what your company could gain from trade advertising.

» CONTRIBUTORS

Meet the crew that keeps the cogs moving at GearTrends®.

» SNEWS® LAW REVIEW

Check out a sampling of what you'll find from our online legal resource center.

» MERCHANDISING: BEING GREEN

Environmentally friendly lighting, fixtures and flooring are popping up for the retail sector.

» THE PRODUCT ZONE

Get the 411 on the latest and hottest products hitting the trade show circuit this season.

**» 2005 SNEWS® RETAILER SURVEY**

A summary of our survey where retailers rate the best and worst of 2005. Find complete results and analysis at www.SNEWSnet.com/surveys.



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publishers' corner

As we begin our fourth year of publishing the GearTrends® magazines, and our fifth year as the owners of SNEWS® (www.snewsnet.com), it seems appropriate to begin by expressing our deep gratitude for the continued outpouring of support, both emotional and financial. Our business continues to grow, evolve and remain profitable thanks to the expanding ad and subscription support from our rapidly widening circle of industry friends.

Still, there remain a number of companies that continue to assert there is no value in trade advertising, while at the same time expressing deep appreciation for the presence of a trade publication with the quality and standards of GearTrends®. True, it could be argued that those companies might not need the brand exposure received from ads in GearTrends®; from a purely black-and-white business and marketing standpoint, there may be little to gain for that brand by advertising. However, when it comes to evaluating the pros and cons of potential trade advertising—be it with us or with other trade publications—we encourage brands to recognize that advertisement provides financial support that endorses a company's belief in that publication's voice as one that is good for the industry.

If a company values a voice for the trade that supports the specialty outdoor industry with valuable trend and business information, fair and balanced investigative reports, insider insights, training support, and unmatched journalistic skills and integrity, we'd like to think it would also be willing to invest its marketing dollars in the SNEWS® and GearTrends® team. By investing in us, brands are also investing in the retailers who read GearTrends®, so in fact each brand does have something to gain by advertising.

Reader letters, emails and calls confirm that no other magazine is as widely read, broadly distributed and highly respected as GearTrends® magazine is. And no other online news and information service for the outdoor specialty industry is as highly regarded and widely subscribed to as SNEWS®. Because of that, we feel very strongly that we can provide assurance that ads in our publications will be noticed by more retail buyers, more retail managers, more retail floor staff and more people of influence with the consumer than they will with any other trade publication that says it is serving the outdoor industry.

When it comes to trade advertising, we encourage companies to think of ways to use *paid space* in a trade magazine like GearTrends® more creatively: Send a message that will inspire others, promote a cause or service project you believe in, sponsor education that will benefit your retailers reading it, or use it as a billboard for recognizing retailers or individual reps or individual salespeople for exemplary performance. There are numerous ways to think outside the page, so to speak.

Of course, rest assured, whether a company advertises or not, GearTrends® and SNEWS® will still write about the products it provides, the services it offers and about it as a company—good or bad. We are not influenced to put a positive spin on editorial coverage if a company advertises or to focus on the negative if it doesn't—and we would question the integrity of any trade publication that links editorial coverage to dollars spent.

Each day, nothing is more important than producing the information and news our readers want at a higher level than expected. And the only way we know to do that is to keep listening to your ideas, comments and feedback. We know you expect us to be special. We promise to keep delivering.

Thanks for being a part,


Michael Hodgson and Therese Iknoian
Co-owners, SNEWS® LLC



Susan Mantle Photography

» DID YOU KNOW?

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contributors



THOSE WHO MAKE THE GEARS TURN AT GEARTRENDS®



» **MICHAEL HODGSON** is an award-winning journalist and author of numerous books including "Camping For Dummies," "Compass and Map Navigator" and "Facing the Extreme." He continues to pen articles for select consumer magazines, including a regular humor column for *Hooked on the Outdoors*. He was the founder of Adventure 16's Wilderness Outings program and garnered extensive retail experience as a store manager there, before becoming the general manager for Western Mountaineering. Michael also served as an editor for *Outdoor Retailer* magazine where he helped launch the *Daily Exposure*.



» **THERESE IKNOIAN** is an award-winning and internationally published fitness/sports journalist, has written numerous books, including "Mind-Body Fitness For Dummies" and "Fitness Walking," and continues to write for magazines such as *Trail Runner*. She worked as a news reporter for the San Jose Mercury News (where she was on the 1990 Pulitzer Prize-winning news team), and has a master's degree in exercise physiology. As an avid athlete and fitness enthusiast, Therese was a nationally ranked race walker, and now participates in adventure races, trail running, mountain biking and whatever else catches her fancy.



» **MARCUS WOOLF** has worked as a journalist in the outdoor industry for nine years and served as editor for *Outdoor Retailer* magazine. In 2002, he returned to his home state of Alabama where he works as a freelance writer for the GearTrends® Network and consumer publications such as *Backpacker* and *Hooked on the Outdoors*. Marcus hikes and paddles throughout the country, and he is one of the few outdoor trade and consumer journalists who specializes in exploring and testing gear in the South.



» **SHARON LEICHAM** has been a merchandiser and marketer for more than 20 years working with both large and small manufacturers and retailers, such as Royal Robbins, Specialized Bicycle, Sierra Designs and *Outdoor Retailer* magazine. Sharon is the author of "Merchandising Your Way to Success" and "How to Sell to Women." She offers merchandising advice on her website, www.merchandisingHUB.com.



» **CHRIS HARGES** is a partner at Satellite Design, a San Francisco graphic design firm specializing in corporate identity, packaging and POP. Before founding Satellite Design, he managed marketing communications programs for outdoor retailers and manufacturers including Eastern Mountain Sports and The North Face. After 10 years of association with the industry, he may finally have all the gear he needs. Ha!



» **BOB WOODWARD** started his career in the outdoor business at Sierra Designs in 1971. After leaving SD, he drifted into journalism, first with World Publications and later with Times-Mirror Magazines and CBS Magazines. Woody returned to the world of freelancing as a writer and photographer after selling SNEWS®—which he founded in 1982—to current owners/publishers Michael and Therese in 2001.



» **CLYDE SOLES** is the former gear editor for *Rock & Ice* and *Trail Runner* magazines, and has more than a decade of experience as a professional equipment tester. On top of that, he spent a decade in outdoor retail and has been climbing and skiing since the wood age. His latest book, "Climbing: Training for Peak Performance," was published by The Mountaineers.

» BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF OZ



WENDY GEISTER, managing editor, has been an outdoor lover and journalist for more than 12 years. After a long tenure at *Outdoor Retailer* magazine, and its affiliates the *Daily Exposure* and *Fly-Fishing Retailer*, Wendy joined the GearTrends Network® in 2002. She enjoys kayaking, camping, skiing, kickboxing and traveling.



JOHN DAVIDSON, art director, has been an outdoorsman since the first time his mother took him camping in Yosemite at age 6. He has hiked all the major points in the Valley, including five summits of Half Dome. John was art director of *Outdoor Retailer* and *Daily Exposure* for six years prior to hopping onto the GearTrends® Network in 2002.

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