

Outdoor survival and sports program lures students

By Jeff Kruse

Experiences in peak climbing, winter camping, cross-country skiing and sailing are available to interested students this winter—for a price.

Outward Bound, Inc., a non-profit educational organization, offers courses that range from a nine-day Nordic skiing trip in Colorado (\$350) to 16 days of sailing off the coast of Maine (\$825).

The experience is well worth the cost, according to Cheryl Cress, a former UNL student.

"I loved it," said Cress, "it taught me a lot about myself—to trust myself, and to trust others."

Cress backpacked in Oregon for 28 days with Outward Bound during the summer of 1973.

Three-day solo

"Part of the course involved a three-day solo, where I was left alone in a secluded area," she said. "They supplied me with a poncho and a notebook—no food."

Ski Nebraska's grass for kicks

By Bob Lannin

Most people consider the packed powder conditions before going skiing and never consider skiing down the slopes of Nebraska.

But with grass skiing, skiers face neither of these problems. Yes, grass skiing.

Grass skis are about two feet long, and have a set of rollers attached to a metal blade, according to Don Buchanan, sales manager of Ski Racket in Omaha.

Buchanan said grass skiing is "exactly like snow skiing. You use your edges to carve turns and make quick slalom turns." Regular snow ski boots and poles are also used, he said.

The best time for grass skiing is from spring to fall, Buchanan said, when the ground is solid and isn't too cold.

The difference between snow skiing and grass skiing is that the former is a much rougher ride and makes a lot more noise, Buchanan said.

"The movements, balancing and conditioning are all the same," Buchanan said.

Buchanan said grass skiing is not helpful for the beginning skier, but is excellent as a conditioning exercise.

"It's difficult to pick up if you've never skied," he said.

Buchanan said any long steep hill is good for grass skiing. Memorial Park in Omaha and Crescent Ski Hill in Iowa are good spots to grass ski, he said.

"The steeper the hill, the better," Buchanan said, "with a nice, long run out."

Grass skiing originated in Europe as ski training for racers, Buchanan said. The sport is popular on the east and west coasts, especially in California, where it is a year-round sport, he added.

Buchanan said the Ski Racket was the only retail outlet for grass skis in Nebraska. They have sold eight pairs of grass skis for \$140 each in the two months they have had them.

The most popular style of grass skis are Rolkas, Buchanan said, which are manufactured in Italy.

Buchanan said he thought grass skis would probably be a passing fad in Nebraska because of the limited availability of long hills in Nebraska.

Managers of Lincoln ski shops said they had heard of grass skis, but only Bivouac carried them during the summer.

After three days with only water for nourishment, she returned to a campsite (as did the other women participating) to continue the course, which included hiking 10 to 15 miles a day, carrying a 50 lb. backpack, rappelling from mountains and running 13 miles through an Oregon logging camp.

Students that enroll in Outward Bound are responsible for their own transportation to the site of the course, where the rest of the needs (backpacks, sleeping bags, etc.) are taken care of.

Scholarships available

Courses are available in Colorado, Oregon, Minnesota, Maine, New Mexico, North Carolina and New Hampshire.

UNL does not offer academic credit for the courses, however, but Bill Murphy, recreation director, said students may register through other schools who offer credit for the courses and have the credits transferred to UNL. The registrar then makes a decision as to whether the credit may be applied to the students' records.

To register, a student must submit a \$10 non-refundable entrance fee with his application. If the application is accepted, \$100 of the tuition is due within two weeks of the acceptance.

There are scholarships available to those who are financially disadvantaged. Cress went on a scholarship that paid \$350 of the \$450 tuition fee.

Mark Smith, a UNO student, went mountaineering in Colorado with Outward Bound three years ago.


Worth the money

"It was well worth the money. There's not a whole lot of skills training involved, but there's a lot of importance placed on self worth and personal growth."

Although most of the programs are available to anyone 16 years or older, Smith said they are best suited for younger college and older high-school students.

"They deliberately put you under a lot of stress, both physical and mental. People from different backgrounds are put together so that conflicts occur. This helps you to learn to work with people," she said.

Outward Bound has been operating in the United States since 1962.



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