"Every kid has dreams — my dreams were the Olympics."

Jim "Moose" Barrows by Tracy DelliQuadri

Because I am a ski racer I know the hours of hard work and the dedication needed to become one of the best ski racers in the world, a champion. In looking for a person to interview for **Three Wire Winter** magazine, I wanted to find a hero of Routt County, a champion. The obvious choice was Jim "Moose" Barrows. Moose, a longtime resident of Steamboat Springs has his name engraved in the book of Steamboat greats.

Born on April 25, 1944 in Los Angeles, California ("a long time ago"), Moose came to Steamboat Springs when he was 5. "I think my parents were driving through Steamboat when we ran out of gas and we just stayed here. My dad worked for Stevens-Chesney Chevrolet, and my mother was a teacher at Moon Hill."

The only thing that Moose regrets about growing up in Steamboat is that he grew up too fast. "Steamboat is the greatest place in the world to grow up. I have been fortunate enough to travel all over the world — skiing has taken me everywhere — and I still haven't found a better place. The possibilities here are endless. They built all of the schools right next to all of my favorite playgrounds: Butcherknife Creek and the canyon that is just north of the high school. There are some great climbing rocks in there. We played cowboys and Indians until all hours of the night in these playgrounds. Steamboat is really wholesome; I can't think of a better place to be if you're growing up."

Many of Moose's earliest memories deal with skiing. "I remember getting stuck up on Howelsen Hill; I didn't know how to turn so I had to go straight down it. I can also remember Gordy Wren fixing me up with different pairs of jumping skis as I grew older. Jumping was a big thing when we were little kids. That's one of the advantages of living in Steamboat; we have an excellent jumping program. We used to have a jump behind the swimming pool. There were also jumps on Crawford Hill, Wither's Hill and on the hill behind my house. I used to jump at night. I did everything as a kid, jump and go fast."

Wondering how Moose became interested in skiing, I asked him about his family's involvement in skiing. "All of the family didn't have the same intensity on skiing as I did. My mom and dad never did ski until I stopped ski racing. As long as I did my schoolwork and

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stayed out of trouble, my parents were very supportive of my skiing. They thought it was great. I became interested in skiing because it was fun and I liked it; a lot of kids skied, so it was something in which to compete.

"If you can beat everyone your own age, then you have to go someplace else for competition. I skied with the older guys. There were a bunch of guys here that were very good: Jon and Jerre Elliott, Alan Larson, Loris Werner, Steve Brown, Butch Gooding, and others. We trained on Howelsen Hill because Mt. Werner didn't have any ski lifts on it yet. We used to have to drive jeeps up, where See Me and Voodoo are now. There used to be plowed roads to the top of the trails. We would just throw some snow over the roads and have a race; either that or we would make a jump and we'd jump over the road."

Because skiing is not a school sport, it's hard to be involved and compete seriously in it. Wondering if there had been any change in the school's attitude about ski racing, I asked Moose how the skiers were treated in school. "We were considered 'different.' It's always going to be that way because skiing is not a school sport. I never had a problem individually because I worked through the teachers. I gave them a legitimate excuse and always did my work and handed it in on time. If I kept my grades up I never had a problem going to a ski race. I never had to have any coaches stand up for me in school; I did all of the work by myself.

"The added experience of working with my teachers was a big advantage. They didn't let me miss school; they excused me." In thinking back to his school days, Moose remembers one teacher who affected him the most. "Mrs. Campbell was the best teacher I ever had. She put me through college, even though she was a high school teacher. She taught us the right things to do. Mrs. Campbell was the best."

Moose was a very athletic child. "I lived and died for football. That was what everybody did in Steamboat, and then they skied in the winter. In the spring everybody did track. We had to run around on the dirt roads around the school. We had a good track team. I was also an awesome marble player; we played a lot of marbles. In the summer I had to work. When I was younger I worked at Dad's Texaco station and sold gas. When I got older I worked for Yampa Valley Electric, building powerlines. You had to work, if you wanted money."

Through high school Moose skied with the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club. "Every kid has dreams; my dreams were the Olympics or the NFL. You always have to have some dreams or goals to live by. One of the big things that gave me the incentive to go fast was that there were a lot more competitors at home. First I had to make the high school team. They didn't take you on trips if you didn't win at home. Now it's a situation where everybody goes no matter what.

"It's too bad for the kids now. They're spending so much money because everybody goes everywhere. When I skied with the Winter Sports Club we had high school competitions where

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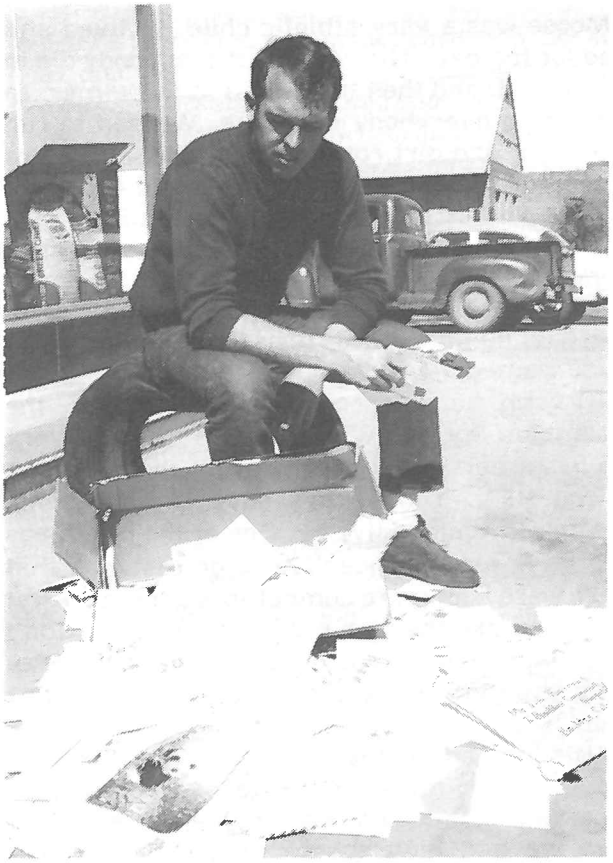
"I became interested in skiing because it was fun."



Steamboat Pilot Photo

"In the summer I had to work, you had to work if you wanted money."

there were trials at home, and only the five fastest guys went. If you didn't beat the five fastest guys, you stayed at home and worked on beating them the next week."

The Winter Carnival, a Steamboat tradition for many years, has been the highlight of the winter for many Routt County residents. "If you look back at the roots of the Winter Carnival, you'll find that it is designed for the locals. Winter Carnival was invented because everybody had cabin fever from staying indoors through the Christmas and January cold spell. The first part of February the people of Steamboat got outside and said, 'Let's have a party.' That's what the carnival stands for. Unfortunately, it's become necessary to become more commercialized.

"When I was growing up, the Winter Carnival had skijoring and all of the horse events, but instead of matching up the horseback riders and skiers by a legitimate draw, we would negotiate with the riders and pick our own horses. There used to be a lot of bartering down at the end of the street. The fastest guy usually ended up with the fastest horse, which is why they eventually had to make a fair draw.

"The best part of the street events were the prizes. Instead of giving little ribbons, the merchants in town gave us material merchandise prizes. We always had something to shoot for, like a new pair of socks. Wigwam socks were a big deal if you won them. You could also win things like gloves, goggles and hats. We didn't have a lot of money back then, so the inspiration was a lot stronger. It was a lot of fun.

"Today Winter Carnival still has the same fun events, although it is more organized. The announcer used to sit at the end of the street. Half of the time he didn't know who he was announcing before they came down; today it's all done with numbers. The Winter Carnivals are such a big success because everybody participates in everything; it's great.

"Winter Carnival should be centered around the jumping. That is what it always was centered around, and that's the way it should be. You can have the street events and whatever else, but the 90-meter jumping should be the main event of the Winter Carnival."

To be a ski racer, one must have certain goals to attain, certain ideals to achieve, a certain amount of success. Thinking back to his early racing days, Moose remembers his main goal.

"My goal was that every time I got into the starting gate I wanted to win. That way of thinking goes back to Gordy Wren. Gordy used to develop those kind of instincts into all of the racers; he did a lot to develop that instinct into the people of Steamboat. Every time we did anything, whether it was on the ski hill or in school or wherever, it was to win. I think Gordy was the one to start it. That kind of thinking during those years seemed to be the pre-eminent force throughout Steamboat. It was the way people of Steamboat grew up.

"When I was in high school I had to make the high school team. When I was definitely on the high school team, I had to make it to the Junior National team. When I qualified for the Junior National team, I had to win the Junior Nationals. After winning the Junior Nationals, I had to win the Senior Nationals. I had to make my mark. It's like climbing a ladder. You have to keep progressing. Skiing better was just another one of the progressions.

"When I went to college, at the University of Colorado, I had to make the college ski team, which was quite hard in those days. Spider Sabich, Jimmy Heuga, Bill Marolt and all of the guys that were on the National Team were on the University of Colorado ski team too. It was harder to make the college ski team than it was to make the national ski team. It was possible to be on the national team and not qualify to make it to a college ski race.

"I made the world championship team in 1966. I was 18. I had never been out of the country before, and they took me to Portillo, Chile. It was a great big world out there; the people didn't speak English and they ate strange food. My trip to the world championships was my first ex-

perience out of the country and I learned a lot, but I didn't win that race. It's tough to win when it's your first time out of the country and you're in a pressured situation. I remember hearing all of the stories about Jean-Claude Killy and I thought, this is a new ball game and the players are a lot better. It was exciting.

"The next year, 1967, when I went over to Europe for the first time, I did better. I raced the Hannenkahm downhill for the first time. The Hannenkahm is the gnarliest, scariest, most awesome downhill ever; it's above and beyond everything else. It's the most exciting minute and 55 seconds anybody could ever have.

"I was a young, naive kid who was there with all of the other young, naive kids racing against Killy, Schranz, and all of the other skiing legends. It's fun to go fast and be good. I came over that last knoll, for the last 20 seconds of going 90 miles an hour, and there's 100,000 people screaming and cheering for you, even if they don't know who you are. It's definitely a rush. From that day on, there was no question in my mind; I wanted to be a downhill ski racer. That's the way it was for the next five years."

During his skiing career, Moose had to deal with the death of two of his greatest skiing companions, Buddy Werner and Spider Sabich. "Death affects everybody. Buddy Werner's death was really tough. Buddy was a big influence on me, and Buddy had a lot of pride in Steamboat. In his own quiet way Buddy was an influence nationwide. We as a nation, and Steamboat, lost a lot with Buddy's death. He was a good leader in that he didn't say much.

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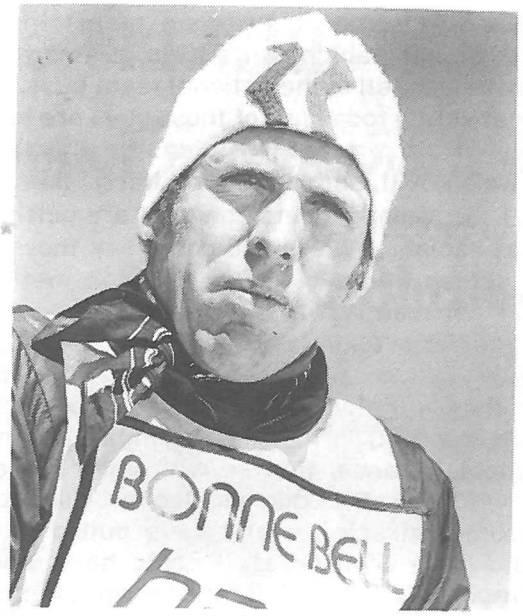

Steamboat Pilot Photo

"I was really lucky to grow up in Steamboat because the idols are always there."

"The best advice I got was from Buddy when I was still in high school. They sent me to a big national race, and Buddy was there being a hero. In just a few words he helped my skiing a lot. He said, 'Every time I look around I want to see you right on my tail.' He never had to say anything else. I knew if I stayed with Buddy I'd be in good shape. Little did I know that being on Buddy Werner's tail required going about 90 miles an hour all of the time, but that's how you learn, and that experience with Buddy carried me a long, long way.

"Buddy's death was tough because it affected so much of what I was involved with. The greatest effect was the loss of leadership that he was destined to provide for the future of American skiing. Spider's death was of a different consequence, the loss of a really good friend. He had a lot of things to offer, and it was just sort of a waste. That was the hardest thing with Spider's death, the waste of it."

Every successful skier reaches a point in skiing where he meets his idols and competes against them. "I was really lucky to grow up in Steamboat because the idols are always there. There's no sense in being awed by them; they are just normal people too. Today I think it's more valuable than ever to have these people as your friends, to have their respect.

"We had some really good teams in those days: Spider Sabich, Billy Kidd, Jimmy Heuga — those were all of the national team guys. If you look at skiing today, all of those guys are heavily involved with promoting skiing. We all still ski a lot, we enjoy it, and that's something I don't see a lot of the athletes doing now that are getting out of ski racing. I guess you could say those were the golden years of ski racing for me; those years between 1967 and 1977 were the best ever. Not just for me but universally for the sport."

Every ski racer has a certain mishap or fall that they will always remember. Moose has one particular fall, in the 1968 Olympic downhill at Grenoble France, that he will never forget. "I just went over the edge way too far. I suppose, if by some miracle I could have pulled it off, I would have been great; I could have won the Olympics. I didn't pull it off, though. I had a fall. That's all that it boiled down to. But nobody remembers who got second.

"They had two bumps that were a 90-degree angle from each other. You had to swing out wide, take the first bump, land and make a tight, 90-degree turn, make the second bump and go through a long, straight schuss area. When you're in a ski race they time you from when you leave the start to when you cross the finish line. The shortest distance and the quickest times make the difference.

"What I was trying to do was to minimize the distance I had to travel to go around these two bumps. I was trying to go over the first bump and land on the back of the second bump. By doing this I would've taken a much straighter line into the first bump, gone through the air, taken a much shorter route and not have been slowed down by turning in between the bumps. Every time you turn it slows you down.

"What I was trying to accomplish just was not possible. Actually, on a section training run I had pulled it off. I knew exactly what I was trying to do; there was no question in my mind. Unfortunately, the day of the race was postponed one day because of bad weather. We weren't able to spend a lot of time on the course. On the day of the race, the jump just wasn't possible. I hit the first bump and it threw me high and more to the right than I wanted to be. I knew instantaneously that I was in big trouble.

"I wasn't really hurt that bad, just a dislocated hip. I was sent down to this hospital which was probably built around 1812. That was the real experience. I was skiing again in a month. I was fine. I'm sure that hard of a fall had some sort of mental affect. It couldn't help but affect me mentally when everybody I've met in the last 20 years has reminded me of it. The next year, when I was running the Hannenkahm, the first thing the announcer tells the crowd is, 'Here comes the guy that blew it.'

"It doesn't really bother me, though; I suppose I've become somewhat callous about it. I've justified it in my mind for what it represents. I may have made a mistake, though. I was skiing good that day. I had a good run going. If I had taken the wide line, which was the line that Killy took, maybe I could've beaten him, but that's history now. I made a decision and I have to live with it."

After five years of skiing with the U.S. Ski Team, Moose moved on to pro skiing. "I started pro racing in 1971 and ended in 1975. Those five years of pro racing were the greatest five years anybody could experience. They used to call us the 'swashbuckling pros.' We would roll into town and have fun. We were making enough money to have a few bucks in our pockets. It was during the time when Vietnam was on everybody's mind. When we came into town the people would let loose. I think they respected us because we had a positive viewpoint on life. We really did. All of the guys racing on the tour were great friends. It was a camaraderie that you just don't experience anymore. We were a team, a team that was competing within itself. It was a really great experience. We were sort of like a

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traveling circus. We promoted skiing for what it really was, which is something you can do at any age, with anybody and in any shape.

"Bob Beattie, the guy who was running all of the pro racing, brought us all together. He was our coach at the '68 Olympics and at the University of Colorado. He also involved a lot of guys from the World Cup Races. He brought over Killy and all of the other international ski racing legends. We were all together working for what we believed in, skiing. People were really receptive to us because of the times, that transition that we were going through. Vietnam, the beatniks and the hippies, all of us were really tuned in to what we were doing. We had a sort of nonaligned company, a troop of circus guys.

"The pro race was a real happening in Steamboat. That's what is so neat about having ski races. All of a sudden, in the middle of all the chaos, everybody forgets all of their problems. It's a really good opportunity for the community to consolidate all of their efforts. Everybody goes out and has fun. The restaurants liked us because we brought in lots of people and we spent money. The people liked us because we would be involved with them. It was a really good experience. It taught me how to keep doing whatever it is that I do, which is to squeak out a living and still be able to go skiing every day."

Today Moose is still heavily involved with skiing. Ever since his pro racing, Moose has gone around the country teaching seminars on skiing. "I was doing a series of ski shows for Frontier Airlines in the middle of the '70s because they were sponsoring me on the pro tour. The ski shows were big things. The first clinic I ever did was in St. Louis. I walked onto the stage in front of 800 skiers from St. Louis,

Steamboat Pilot Photo

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Missouri. I had to come up with a program. My ski conditioning clinics were before aerobics were a trend. I was leading the group when I tripped and fell off of the stage. All of the people, my boss included, liked the act so much that I had to do it 10 more times in the next 10 cities.

"The hardest thing that I ever had to learn once I started doing seminars is when you go in and talk to people you can say the same thing so many different ways. I go into the different areas and the people there are so hungry for knowledge and they are so fresh to the technicalities and thinking of ski racing. Because of this, instead of talking about skiing in the technical jargon, I talk about the mind tricks of skiing. When I go into a clinic, I talk to the people about how they can get instant gratification from skiing and the aspects of it, the visualization of where they can get an immediate grasp of something and see a dynamic improvement in their skiing.

"I can take these novices that have no idea what they are doing, and in 10 minutes of working with these people, I can have their attention focused on something they are trying to accomplish. From their own viewpoint, the gratification and the success they get from almost immediate benefits is almost incredible. I can go out and teach them a thought process — not a physical activity but an actual thought process — and see results. That really is a lot of fun."

Moose is still heavily involved with promoting skiing, although he is not directly involved with the Steamboat Ski Corp. "There's a lot of short-term satisfaction in seeing a great ski race come off and people ski fast. I administer the Marlboro Ski Challenge, which is a recreational spin-off of what we did as pro racers. I started the Marlboro Ski Challenge over five years ago, but today we have over 4,000,000 skiers participating in this program annually. It's just a short, very simple, very mediocre slalom race on which we can introduce anybody that can make a half-

accomplished turn and they can experience ski racing. There's none of the complications of a structured racing program. You show up and go.

"I also try to get families involved with the Equitable Family Ski Challenge. The single greatest asset in skiing is that there are no physical limitations. Physical meaning age, size, coordination, etc. So consequently you can do it as a family unit. That is one thing that skiing has that virtually no other sport has to offer."

During his pro racing, Moose coached ski camps in the summers. "I coached all over the country. The problem when you pro race is that your name is up in print so you have to utilize it for something other than going down a race course, so all of the pro racers coached a lot of

"I try to get families involved with the Equitable Family Ski Challenge."

summer camps. I coached in the United States, Europe, South America and New Zealand. When you have all of these eager, young kids that start asking you questions that you can't answer, you have to think about what you're doing. That's when I started to really learn how to ski. That's when I decided to be a ski coach."

After Moose had quit all of his pro racing, he decided that he wanted to be a full-time racing coach. In 1978 Moose was asked to coach for the U.S. Ski Team. "I coached the United States Men's Ski Team for three years, through the 1980 Olympics. In the spring of 1980, after the Olympics, I put my plan for the next year together. My plan didn't agree with what the trustees had in mind.

"Coaching is great. It is one of the most exciting and exhilarating experiences anybody could have. It's tough to maintain the intensity and consistency throughout a long period of time. When you're in a visible position then people want to see you visibly working; they don't allow you any time to rest. Sooner or later something has to go. Guys that last for a very long time are very unusual in the coaching profession."

Thinking back to his first ski race as a U.S. Ski Team coach, Moose remembers his nervousness. "I was more nervous as a coach than I ever was as a racer. I can't imagine what my coaches used to think when I used to ski down a race course. Today there is a different relationship between the coaches and their racers. When I was a ski racer there was a lot more responsibility placed on the coaches. Today you have to rely on people other than the coach. You have to rely on the service organization. Today ski racing is so technical that not only do the racers not have the knowledge to work on their ski equipment, they don't have enough time to know it.

"There is a lot of responsibility placed on the coaches and the service organization. That is the reason for all of the assistant coaches and the technical engineers and assistants. The head coach becomes more of an organizational exercise rather than technical knowledge process at the upper levels of ski racing. One thing you have to realize when you're a coach of any kind is that athletes are going to get hurt; you have to be somewhat callous about it. I got hurt several times. I never realized the pressure I was putting on the coaches when I raced. Although you never like to see anybody break, physically or mentally, you have to accept it."

Because Moose has coached and raced on an Olympic team, he knows of the pressures the term 'Olympics' can put on an athlete. "The pressure is unbelievable. It's all a media hype. Competitively the Olympics are really a letdown. There are fewer people to beat in the Olympics, and the courses aren't as difficult as the courses skied each week in the World Cup. The Winter Olympics aren't usually in an alpine environment.

"In choosing for the Olympic team, you have to go with the racers with the most experience. I think a second opportunity in the Olympics is a big advantage. The first Olympics is just a learning experience; the next time it's a real race. You have to be able to focus your attention and concentration on the job and shut out all of the hype."

"It's fun to go fast and be good."

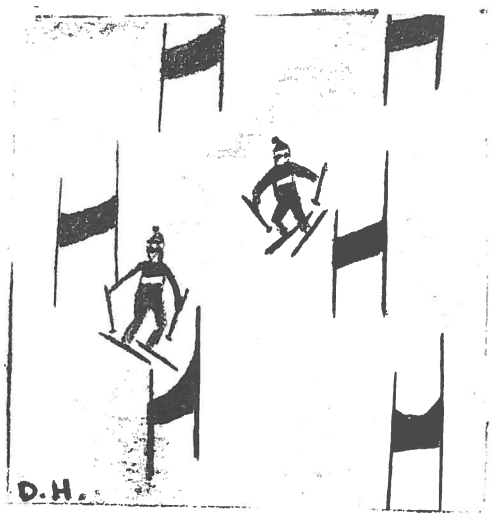
At the end of his interview I asked Moose one last question. "What's the most exciting thing that's happened to you as a coach?" This was his answer: "The most exciting thing is to take a real rookie to the Hannenkahm Downhill. To see a young kid that can't sleep or eat and wets his bed because he is so nervous, to work through a week of training and experience the excitement and accomplishment of completing the world's greatest downhill race, like I remember doing. To see a kid experience the thrill of the Hannenkahm Downhill is the most exciting."

Moose was definitely the right person to interview for my article in the **Three Wire Winter** magazine. I can relate all of his experiences to my ski racing. I know what Moose means when he talks of the mental anguish a ski racer can put himself through because I am just recovering from an injury. I am looking forward to this coming season with anticipation. With a little hard work, I hope the season will be rewarding. I also know of the joy Moose expressed when having achieved a certain goal or having won a race.

I learned a lot in writing this article about Jim "Moose" Barrows, but the thing I will remember most is one of Moose's philosophies: "It's like when you're at the end of a really long running race, you can see the finish line at the end of a long, steep hill. Instead of slowing down because I am tired, I try to go even faster because I know this is where everyone else is going slower. This is where I can gain something on everyone else."

In ski racing, this pertains to a particularly rough, icy or steep section in a race course. In these sections of the course, I can gain on everyone else if I try to go faster and faster instead of going slower because the section of the course is "scary" or "hard." I learned a lot about ski racing, Steamboat, Moose Barrows, and myself while writing this article. Hopefully, I will benefit from learning a ski legend's secrets to going fast. Who knows? Maybe someday I, myself, will be a ski legend.

"This is where I can gain something on everyone else."



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