



(shown left to right)
Ken Ford, Ed Murphy, Marc Melchiorre, Dave Pick (course conductor), Larry Brown, Brian Weisel, and Rick Samuelson



New Members of the "Board," Snowboard That Is...

In January, ASIA held a Snowboarding Level I Certification Course at Snö Mountain, alongside the Alpine Level I Cert/Refresher. The first weekend was cold with great conditions and no crowd. The second weekend was warm with great carving conditions that were dry on Saturday and a light mist on Sunday. This was my first time at Snö Mountain (formerly Montage), and I really enjoyed the lack of lift lines and good snow coverage on the trails.

Dave Pick, Level 2 SB Instructor from upstate New York, was our instructor for the course. Dave is a very relaxed and outgoing guy that instantly puts people at ease. His quick sense of humor and mentor-style approach are backed by a deep understanding of the art of snowboarding. I have been snowboarding for about 12 years, and have taken several lessons. I learned more in these 4 days than I did during all of my previous lessons combined.

The quality of the instruction was noticed even beyond those of us taking the class. On the last day, we were paired up to practice teaching the turning progression. A snowboarder approached me to ask if I worked for the mountain. He had been watching us from the lift and noticed the type of work we were doing. He was an intermediate snowboarder looking to take it to the next level. He indicated that he had not been impressed with instruction he had witnessed from mountain ski schools, but couldn't help but notice what we were teaching and how we approached it. He was thrilled with the idea of a logical progression that builds skills by emphasizing the fundamentals. He was very disappointed that we couldn't offer him a lesson immediately. We told him the ASIA website address, and I suspect he will be contacting ASIA soon. This story gives a concrete example of how people easily recognize the quality of the ASIA program!

And did I mention fun? I enjoyed being with everyone both on and off the slopes. It's great to be around people who love snow sports (and apparently food) as much as I do. It was a pleasure being with all of you that I know and meeting several wonderful people. We even made some progress in skier/snowboarding relations. The first weekend, we somehow self

segregated into skiers on one side of the table and snowboarders on the other during dinner. (It was funny how it happened completely by accident.) By the second weekend, we were fully integrated at dinner. I say this in jest, of course! Everyone seems to thoroughly enjoy each other's company, no matter how they choose to come down the mountain.

I'm happy to report that we now have 6 new Level I Snowboarding Instructors. Larry, Ed, Marc, Rick and I are all teaching in the Monday night program at Spring Mountain. Now Brian has expressed interest in joining us for the rest of the season. In just the last few years, the snowboarding program has blossomed from one instructor to six of us. For the first time this year, we didn't have to turn away any students because we actually have enough instructors. I hope we will be able to convince some of this year's students to take the Level I certification next year to keep the progression going.

I think I can safely speak for all of the newly-minted Level I Snowboarding Instructors in extending my thanks to Dave for being great, and to everyone who was there for their cheerful company. I hope to ski/snowboard with you again soon. -- **Ken Ford, Merck Ski Assoc.**

