

*SIMON DUMONT: WHY YOU HATE HIM; WHY YOU SHOULDN'T

THE SKIER'S MAGAZINE

powder

17-year-old Duncan Adams, No. 3
in The Draft, in Haines, Alaska.
PHOTO: JEFF CRICCO/LEVEL 1

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THE INAUGURAL DRAFT SONIC YOUTH

THE 20 BEST SKIERS 18 AND UNDER

PLUS: THE HOTTEST RACER GIRL YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF...AND LINDSEY VO

morpheme

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MAINE, 1977

BY ARTHUR BRADFORD

This is a photo of my mother and her sister skiing near our house in Maine sometime after the blizzard of 1977. Probably the first thing you'll notice is that they are naked, which wasn't so unusual in Maine back then, at least among a certain crowd. I was in first grade at the time and I recall thinking they were going to get pretty cold doing that.

We lived out on a point on the coast, surrounded by farmland and lobster fishermen. You could ski across the fields, naked if you wanted, and sometimes there'd even be ice on the bay and you could make it out to the islands. One time someone drove a car out there, across the ice, and got it stuck on the shoreline of a small island. It was a Ford Ranchero, which is like a pick-up truck but with a car's body. It sat there for years in the mud.

My parents used to grow marijuana in our garden and my sister and I would find it drying in the closets. The school we went to no longer exists. It was an experiment in free education where we'd "learn at our own pace," so all I did on winter days was build jumps and ramps on the hillsides off of which our sleds would fly. On the weekends, our dad would take us to the local ski hill where the lift was just a rope line run through the rear hub of an old VW bug.

This picture is one of my favorites, even if it is a little awkward for me to look at. It's just so beautiful the way they've got their long wool socks pulled up, and I love those wooden skis. Sometimes we need to be reminded that skiing isn't all about color and flash and technological advances with sidecuts and carbon compounds. We just need to know that skis are simply the fastest, most efficient way to get from point A to point B when there's snow on the ground.

I believe global warming is upon us because it truly seems like there was much more snow back when I was a kid. We never saw the bare ground in January. But maybe there's something else going on as well. This picture reminds me that we tend to think of everything as magical back in the day. The blizzard of '77 was insane! It kept us out of school for over a week and those snow banks were higher than our house. But maybe it was really only three or four days we missed, and maybe those snow banks wouldn't seem quite so tall to me today.

You know, I bet there are two beautiful women standing naked in the snow somewhere right now. They've got big wide tele skis, plastic boots, and polypropylene socks pulled up over their calves. I'm sure they look awesome in the fresh powder, staring right at that camera lens, creating misty snow memories for the generation to come.

Arthur Bradford's book "Dogwalker" was published by Knopf in 2002. He was a mediocre member of his college ski team and best remembered for skiing his final race buck naked.