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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Van Kirk's Hill? I can't find any reference anywhere to it. Please verify?
So much better. Thanks for the extra work.



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 'You only get so many winters in your life'

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Bernie Rosow, a popular freeskiier and social media
3 personality, died suddenly while doing what he loved on a
4 California mountainside he made his own

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 Bernard (Bernie) Rosow, originally of Williamsville,
7 didn't choose a path to fame and fortune.

8 The freeriding, freestyling skier, who died of cardiac
9 arrest on April 23 while hiking up Bloody Mountain in Mammoth
10 Lakes, California, preferred carving his own routes, building his

11 own jumps, and holistically honing his own blend of Nordic and
12 alpine skiing with ski jumping.

13 The 45-year-old Rosow probably could have gone pro,
14 but he chose his own route: He took on the grind of nighttime
15 slope grooming for one simple reason: So he could just ski every
16 day. And with a knack for technology, he'd put on a camera and
17 film those adventures, becoming a true media personality to
18 approximately 100,000 followers on social media.

19 In a story in *The Sheet*, a weekly newspaper in
20 Mammoth Lakes, California, Editor Paige Fisher wrote: "Through
21 helmet-cam videos and social media, Rosow shared his
22 perspective with a large and growing audience. Thousands
23 followed along, watching him charge steep contours, float
24 through powder, and disappear over blind rollovers."

25 His death shocked and saddened the ski community
26 coast to coast and was covered in a range of newspapers,
27 websites, magazines, and other media — MSN, *San Francisco*
28 *Chronicle*, *Freeskier*, SFGate, the *New York Post*, the *Daily Mail*,
29 *Powder*, *Ski*, *Sun*, and *People*, among others.

30 Rosow's journey through life is a good Vermont story of
31 hardcore tenacity and endurance, along with a love of the
32 outdoors and nature, and with a heavy dose of individualism.

33 **Deep roots in Vermont**

34 Having grown up in a small Vermont village, Bernie was
35 a rambunctious guy at an early age, says neighbor and friend Jon
36 Julian, in whose house Bernie was born.

37 His father, Bruce Rosow, recalls his son started skiing at
38 age 2 with skis strapped onto his Sorels.

39 "He followed me and our dog, Potato, and never
40 stopped. Bernard was always active," he said. "Always jumping.
41 He couldn't sit still."

42 Bernie's uncle, Bob Lyons, recalls his nephew as an
43 adventurer: "My neighbor was doing landscaping work with a
44 bulldozer. Bernie built jumps and started BMX biking: I'd look out

45 the back window, and there he was, flying in the air over this
46 mound.”

47 Lyons’s daughter, Lily [Lyons] adds: “All the kids would
48 come around and watch him because none of us could do it:
49 We’d get hurt immediately.”

50 In those days, Williamsville kids would gather outside
51 the Lessing Family General Store on Dover Road to skateboard
52 and bike on ramps that proprietor Jim Lessing had allowed to
53 encircle the store’s entrance. Bernie was the leader.

54 By age 7, he was skiing in the New England Bill Koch
55 Youth Ski League, competing in the Nordic races coached by
56 Chris and Mary Osgood of Putney. “Just wonderful people: their
57 attitude was always so caring — just having fun with the kids,”
58 Bruce Rosow recalls of those years when his son learned balance
59 and rhythm on skis.

60 “Back then, we would drop Bernard off at Maple Valley
61 [Ski Area] in the morning and pick him up when the lights went
62 off. Maple Valley was just heaven for Bernard,” he says.

63 But so was Van Kirk’s Hill, just up the road from the
64 Rosow home. “He’d wake up, grab the shovel, take his skis,” and
65 head out to “build and ski jumps all day long,” Bruce Rosow
66 says.

67 That love of jumping led his son to the Brattleboro
68 Outing Club ski jumping program in his early teens in which
69 “local legends Dana Zelenakas, Steve Squires, and Bernie Wells
70 taught all those kids, first of all, to be together as a team. And
71 they taught Bernie to fly.”

72 “By the time he left Vermont he’d developed a natural
73 grace and versatility on skis that became his trademark,” Rosow
74 adds.

75 Rosow also credits Vermont’s affordable Junior
76 Instructional Snowsports Program (JISP) for his son’s growth as a
77 downhill skier. All woven together, with a dash of daring and a
78 lot of skill, Bernie’s style earned his renown.

79 Never too fond of school, the young Rosow was an avid
80 reader and an experiential learner self-educated in big machines,
81 heavy equipment, drones, cameras, filming, editing, meteorology,
82 and the great outdoors.

83 “Writing a five-paragraph essay was not really exciting,”
84 his father recalls, but “ski jumping was pretty exciting. He
85 learned technique, how to control himself in the air, how to land;
86 he learned about speed, about takeoff, all very specific skills.
87 Wonderful life lessons.”

88 Julian adds that “Bernie marched to his own drumbeat —
89 one of the few people who, by age 4, knew what he wanted to
90 do for his entire life, which was ski” — or, at least, be airborne.

91 Chuckling, he recalls, “I think he must have been 15; I
92 gave him his first job at Top of the Hill Grill.”

93 Julian, who was running his family’s barbecue restaurant
94 with his two sons and Bernie, recalls that “whenever it was time
95 for cleanup or dish duty, it’d be, ‘Where’s Bernie?’”

96 “And Bernie’s out on his bicycle doing tricks” — in the
97 parking lot, on picnic tables — “entertaining customers.”

98 At 18, having graduated from Leland & Gray Union High
99 School — with pink hair, Lyons adds — Bernie headed west.

100 He first went to Utah and bounced from job to job at
101 three ski areas.

102 In 2001, he made his way to Mammoth Lakes,
103 California, where he began working with Mammoth Mountain, a
104 3,500-acre ski resort with 25 lifts and 180 trails. He worked there
105 until his death.

106 There, he earned a reputation as an ace snowcat
107 operator. He’d work that machine, grooming the slopes from 4
108 p.m. to midnight so he could be the first on the mountain the
109 next morning. Eventually, he became grooming supervisor.

110 Bernie began collaborating with photographer Christian
111 Pondella, whose work appears in magazines and for various
112 products, and then with ski-related corporate sponsors: first
113 Oakley, then Black Crow and, most recently, Zag Skis.

114 Over more than two decades, Rosow and Pondella
115 honed a beautiful friendship skiing, adventuring, and taking
116 photos together.

117 “Bernie had a really good demeanor,” Pondella says. “He
118 was extremely confident in the mountains. Most of the time we’d
119 go out for pure fun, pleasure, and passion: We’d shoot photos for
120 the love of it. And there were times when it was actual work,
121 when we were shooting for his sponsors or for clients.”

122 Bernie was known for his directness and candor. Caring
123 and kind and having inspired so many, he was rarely without an
124 opinion.

125 “He was a wealth of information,” Pondella says. “I’d call
126 him to ask questions about things, to get his advice. And whether
127 he knew the answer or not, he made you think he knew the
128 answer.” Such was Bernie’s infectious confidence.

129 “He was really into boundary pushing — both, you
130 know, at ski resorts and in his own personal life,” Lyons says,
131 describing her cousin’s credo as “Do the thing. Live life to the
132 fullest. Don’t waste a moment.”

133 **Doing it his way**

134 Though he garnered it, it seems Bernie was not interested
135 in celebrity. He skied and lived on his own terms: learning
136 mountains well and navigating them with grace, finesse, and
137 caution.

138 Lyons recalls her cousin as “extremely calculated in his
139 risk versus reward assessments.”

140 “Although he took a lot of risks, I’d never have called
141 him reckless,” says Lyons, a painter and glass artist as well as a
142 professional stunt driver — a line of work in which she credits
143 Bernie’s approach and influence for keeping her safe.

144 Bruce Rosow adds that he didn’t worry about his son’s
145 skiing “because he was thoughtful, calculating, careful.” He
146 might spend hours climbing a mountain, but if conditions weren’t
147 right, he wouldn’t ski it; he’d climb back down.

148 In recent years, Bernie’s visibility steadily increased.

149 “He really was peaking,” his mother, Barbara Lindsey
150 Rosow, says. “There was a sense that he was maturing. He had a
151 child. He was on the top of his game.”

152 Historically, she adds, Bernie “was in the forefront of the
153 sport. He was part of the beginnings of freeskiing.”

154 That took a little troublemaking at the outset: As Lily
155 Lyons recalls, “back in early JISP days at Stratton, Bernie used to
156 get in a lot of trouble for skiing in the half-pipe where skiers
157 weren’t allowed.”

158 Half-pipe skiing became an established event in freestyle
159 skiing and was introduced to the Winter Olympics in 2014, but “I
160 think he had his pass pulled more than once for doing that,”
161 Lyons says.

162 Bernie honed skills in photography, filming, and editing
163 over the years, developing a natural understanding of computers
164 and digital production.

165 Producing videos of mountain biking, skateboarding, off-
166 track motorcycle rides, and adventures with his son for
167 publication on social media, he took great care to ensure that
168 music chosen suited the footage, creating clips that some have
169 described as more art than promotion.

170 “When I watch his videos,” his father says, “it’s like [he’s]
171 a painter.”

172 When the ski season would end in California, Bernie
173 would travel to New Zealand, Australia, South America, and
174 Japan, and “whenever he did that, he was grooming, because
175 grooming kept the food on the table,” his father explains.

176 And his following inevitably grew. “[We] have been
177 astonished by how many people knew Bernard and, for many of
178 those people, how powerful this loss is because they knew him
179 through experiences in the mountains,” the elder Rosow says.

180 People’s connections with Bernie took place “through
181 adventures” not just through “hanging out at a party,” Bruce
182 Rosow observes.

183 Miles Clark, CEO and founder of SnowBrains, a ski
184 website, [posted](#) that Bernie “made things look too easy.
185 “It was almost frustrating to watch him effortlessly rip
186 down the mountain, absorb bumps, bash bad snow, soar off
187 jumps, find impossible transitions, and wait for you at the bottom
188 with a snicker and smile,” Clark said.
189 Recalling Bernie “racing ahead on climbs and
190 disappearing out of follow-cam frames to hit unseen jumps,”
191 Clark added that Bernie “never let his ability turn into ego [...] He
192 didn’t wear his accomplishments as a badge of honor.”

193 Inspiring a new generation

194 In a written tribute, Bernie’s younger brother, Daniel,
195 notes proudly that Bernie was “a favorite skier of the pros.”
196 “Ryan Cary, coach of the US Olympic Freeski Half-pipe
197 Team, mentioned at least three gold medalists who’d come to
198 Mammoth to seek Bernie out,” he said. “They were all amazed
199 by this New Englander who supervised graveyard shifts
200 maintaining snow conditions and still made first chair every
201 single powder day,” — except on the day his son, Alexander, was
202 born.

203 “His ski videos are insane, and yet he was so utterly in
204 control that the worst injury he ever had was a broken hand,”
205 Daniel Rosow continued.

206 “He was the busiest person I’ve ever known and yet
207 always made time to check in on family. It’s like his so-called
208 ADHD worked like a sheepdog[,] breaking trail then doubling
209 back to check on the stragglers.”

210 Daniel Rosow said that Bernie “has always been there for
211 us and continues to be there to coax us out of our comfort zones
212 and make light of our self-absorbed seriousness. [He] will always
213 exemplify for me freedom of spirit, stubbornness of mission,
214 single mindedness of habit, joy of life, blunt honesty as a friend.”

215 Bruce Rosow reflects on the death of his father at age 32,
216 of the same heart disease that took his son’s life, a defining event

217 that helped him deeply cherish his experience as a father to
218 Bernie and Daniel.

219 So it's not surprising to Rosow that his son's "greatest
220 accomplishment was being a dad," a role that he says
221 "completed" him.

222 "It was something outside of himself that made him a
223 much more kind, compassionate human being," Rosow says.
224 Bernie, his partner, Amber Feld, and their son, Alexander,
225 "created a really tight family, his father says. "And they figured it
226 out."

227 Lily Lyons says that "the way he passed, he was on top of
228 the world, dreams achieved, his kid was doing great. And, yeah,
229 it's painful, beautiful: He died doing what he loved to do. On the
230 way up."

231 She added: "I don't like it, but there's something really
232 poetic about it. Shakespearean." (Rosow passed on the day of
233 Shakespeare's birth and death.)

234 In a video posted several months before his death, Bernie
235 said, "You only get so many winters in your life. And so it's super
236 motivating to me to like never miss a day, always use all my time
237 well."

238 **Down the mountain**

239 Daniel Rosow and Lily Lyons recently returned from a
240 "Ski Down for Bernie Day" at Mammoth Mountain, where
241 hundreds of Bernie Rosow's friends and fans converged to give
242 him a fitting sendoff.

243 As Lyons tells it "pro-skiers and Olympians and mountain
244 friends/roommates/coworkers from all over the world attended.
245 Lots of tearful hugs, lots of stories, lots of celebrating the life of
246 Bernie the way he lived it.

247 "Alex, Amber, and [my brother] Sam led us all down the
248 mountain," she continued, and she and Daniel brought up the
249 rear of the group, as "book ends of Bernie's large and loving
250 community."

251 "Everyone waved at the snowcats that lined up on the
252 hill as we descended," Lyons said.
253 Mammoth Mountain will host a celebration of Bernie's
254 life on Saturday, June 13.

255 'He chose his path'

256 Barbara Lindsey Rosow says that in recent years, her
257 son's smile "just kept getting bigger and bigger. That's what really
258 stands out for me, is that by the end of his life, he was just one
259 big smile; he was really happy in his life."

260 Musing on the loss of a son who faced congenital
261 cardiac disease his whole life and who thrived on adrenaline, she
262 senses "that he's free, that he chose his path, that he lived his life
263 the way he wanted to live it."

264 On his last day, he was surrounded by "those mountains,
265 those mountains were where he worshipped: they were sacred to
266 him," she says.

267 "And he died in a way that was quite remarkable, really
268 — on his favorite mountain with his favorite people doing what
269 he loved to do."

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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270 Many of Bernie Rosow's videos can be seen on YouTube.
271 The family suggests that donations in his memory be made to
272 Familial Hypercholesterolemia Foundation (FHF) at
273 theFHfoundation.org and/or to the Brattleboro Outing Club, P.O.
274 Box 335, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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