

EXETER ARCHERS ARE BACK ON TARGET

Exeter's Archery Club has been revived after a hiatus of so many years that no one can quite remember just how long it's been. What's certain is that the first shooting practice in decades commenced last spring, thanks to a group of interested students who had been clamoring for a club and to astronomy instructor John Blackwell.

Victoria Schmidt-Scheuber '08, a founding member of the new club, says Blackwell "was devoted to seeing this club out in the sun again." The group secured a grant from the Dick Day Fund to purchase bows, arrows, targets and safety gear. Fourteen students

joined the initial practices last spring and additional recruits are expected as word of the club spreads.

Blackwell, who also serves as director of the Grainger Observatory, learned archery during his own student days at Northfield Mount Hermon and went on to become varsity team captain. He has since been certified as a Level 3 coach by the National Archery Association, and plans to qualify for the next and highest level certification within a year.

Blackwell says he relishes coaching archery because "it's a sport for people of all ages. I love to see their enjoyment of the sport, and it's satisfying to help them develop proficiency." To



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maintain a steady stance, archers need strong back muscles and a good cardiovascular system, but according to Blackwell, "Inner calm is the key. Archery is a thinking sport."

Schmidt-Scheuber has been fascinated by archery since she was very young. "I was even drawn to images of archers in picture books," she says. "I always admired the stance and the grace that well-practiced archers demonstrate." She is thrilled for the chance to shoot on a regular basis, for an adequate length of time. "There has been no place for me to consistently practice, so I've had to make do with limited opportunities, like summer camp." Now that those limits have been lifted, Schmidt-Scheuber and the club's other members can work on refining their technique and honing the confidence and mental focus the sport demands, lessons that apply far beyond the shooting range. Notes Schmidt-Scheuber, "Archery is an art, as well as a discipline."

The club is investigating opportunities to compete with teams from both Plymouth State University and the University of New Hampshire, and to attend meets in Connecticut. Blackwell says he also plans to have the students attend an indoor national competition in the spring and to participate in a Junior Olympic Archery Development program. But when it comes to archery competition, Blackwell is clear: "There is really no opponent but the archer's own mental ability."

Were you an archer while at Exeter? If you were (or if you have information about or photos of the Archery Club), please email us at bulletin@exeter.edu or write us at The Exeter Bulletin, 20 Main Street, Exeter, NH 03833.