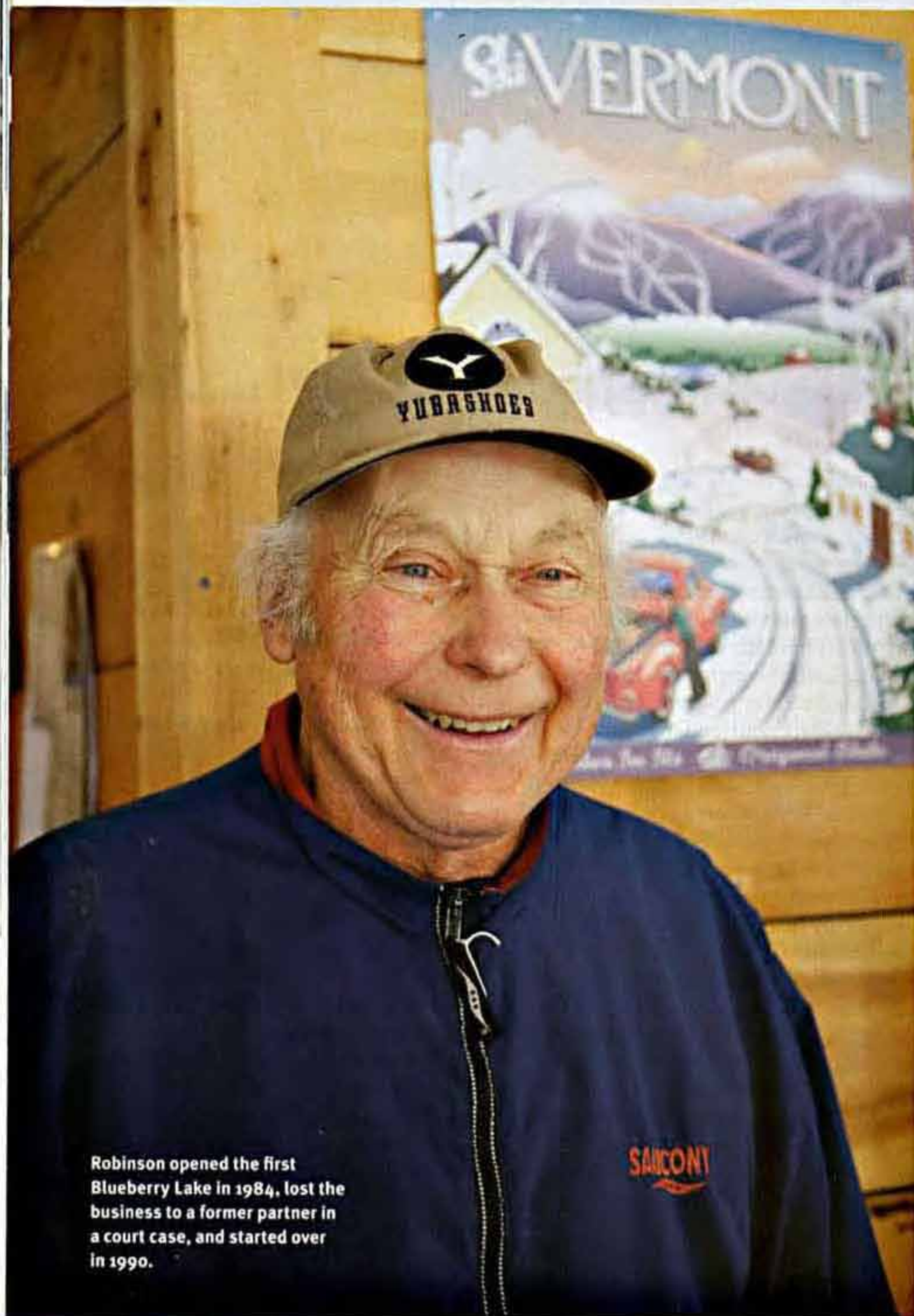


Starting Over

Lenord Robinson has made a success of Blueberry Lake Cross-Country Center not once, but twice.

Story by D.R. Boardman
Photos by Kurt Budliger



Robinson opened the first Blueberry Lake in 1984, lost the business to a former partner in a court case, and started over in 1990.

BLUEBERRY LAKE may be the smallest Nordic touring center in Vermont, but it's got a big heart. For the last 25 years, the Robinson family has run what locals call the "Snow-bowl of Sugarbush" in the shadow of Prickly Mountain in Warren. But the Blueberry Lake Cross-Country Ski Center is much more than just another touring spot. It's a story about love, friendship, betrayal and courage.

The Robinsons immigrated from Sweden around the late 1700s and were among the first settlers in Warren. Many generations later, Lenord, whose name is based on the Swedish spelling, was working on the family farm when he met a sophisticated young girl from Brooklyn who happened to be visiting a neighbor. He asked her out that night to a barn dance in Williston. Like any sensible girl, she declined, but the fire was lit. Gene (as in movie star Gene Tierney) and Lenord have been together for almost 60 years since that first meeting and have nine children, ranging in age from 40 to 60 years old, plus 15 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

They struggled with the ups and downs of the dairy industry for several years before Lenord decided to sell the cows and go into the excavating business. Then tragedy struck when he was misdiagnosed with multiple sclerosis. "I was numb from the waist down and could hardly move," he says. "The first doctor said it was MS, but eventually they figured out it was some kind of vitamin deficiency—I needed more B12, I guess. Anyway, it was the best thing that ever happened to me, because I realized there were so many other things I wanted to do besides just work all the time."