ANCHORAGE: Meet stars, eat brats at NSAA Season Kickoff

KACHEMAK: Groomers make magic on Homer trails

EAGLE RIVER: Ski the Beach, remember a friend

Anchorage 2
Eagle River 12
Fairbanks 14
Girdwood 13
Kachemak 9
Mat-Su 11

Photo by Ophira Group

PHOTO BY ERICK BJORNSEN
**Message from NSAA staff and Board of Directors**

The calendar is packed full of exciting ski season beginnings, starting with the NSAA Season Kickoff on November 5 and first day of Junior Nordic a week later. It’s also the kickoff of our season financially. With a new fiscal year, a new budget has been approved and executed. The usual projections have been made on generous trail support, event participation, grooming expenses and fuel costs. New to this year’s budget include U.S. Nationals, program and event improvement initiatives and new capital projects. The NSAA Board of Directors and staff couldn’t be more excited about the new opportunities ahead and the plans for NSAA to reinvest in its community and itself.

Included in the NSAA budget projections is the U.S. Cross Country Ski Championships. This national race, our national event brings together more than 400 of the country’s best junior and senior skiers. The event selects athletes aspiring to represent the U.S. in the 2018 Winter Olympics. Hundreds of spectators from across the state and country will line the trails at Kincaid Park. We’re excited that ConocoPhillips is the title sponsor for the 2018 U.S. Nationals and other key supporters include Anchorage Frature and Orthopedic Clinic and Rasmuson Foundation. This national event brings new expenses of about $150,000 and new revenue sources to help cover those costs, but more importantly an opportunity to unite the Nordic community and be a part of national history for the ski community. Also included in NSAA’s season projections are new staff members to help ensure quality NSAA programs and events. Part-time directors have been hired in an effort to maximize our potential with continuous improvement as a top priority for Junior Nordic, Anchorage Cup series and Tour of Anchorage. NSAA’s largest program, Junior Nordic, is getting a facelift with new jackets worth over $40,000. For decades, the Junior Nordic jackets were timeless until recently thanks to ConocoPhillips and UBS Financial Services. Both have helped immensely with covering the cost of the new look. Although these initiatives bring new expenses in this year’s budget, the board recognizes the need to reinvest and make improvements to achieve long-term success of Nordic skiing in Anchorage.

New capital projects are also included in this season’s budget. An infrastructure upgrade at Kincaid Stadium projected to be close to $60,000 includes internet, race timing and an advanced sound system. Kincaid Park has world class trails but third world infrastructure. Thanks to Alaska Ski Educational Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation and a handful of private donors, NSAA will soon have real time race results, better communication throughout Kincaid structures and weather camera access for live conditions. Bringing technology to our races and events will allow NSAA to do a better job hosting and promoting the sport of Nordic skiing.

Additional funds are also planned for NSAA’s Ski Jumping program’s track system, as well as for a new roof for the NSAA Hope cabin. Next summer, NSAA plans to build a terrain park at Kincaid Park as a fun draw for our young skiers, much like many other Nordic ski clubs around Alaska and beyond.

We have big plans for the coming season. We are excited to bring new life and energy into our Nordic community with these opportunities, and we couldn’t do it without the support and volunteer time from you. Let the season begin!

**AROUND THE BOWL**

**NSAA Annual Meeting/ Kickoff: Start the season with fun, food and local skiing stars**

The NSAA Annual Meeting is now officially known as the “Season Kickoff” and this year’s edition arrives Sunday, November 5, at the Kincaid Park Chalet. An expo runs from 2:30–4 p.m., followed by the potluck and 4 p.m. and the kickoff at 5.

And guess who’s coming to this year’s kickoff... U.S. Ski Team members Kikkan Randall, Sadie Bjornsen, Erik Bjornsen, Rosie Brennan and Scott Patterson! These are our local Olympic and World Cup athletes and they’ll be mingling and signing post cards for young and not-so-young.

Participants at this season’s Winter Activities Expo include Anchorage Community Races - AMH Anchorage Cup, Backcountry Tours, Biathlon Eagle Eyes, Junior Nordic, NSAA Ski Train, Ski Jumping, Alaska Huts Association, Alaska Speedskating Club, Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Cross Country Alaska, Turnagain Training, OrangeTheory Fitness, Oil & Vinegar, and more!

In addition, NSAA members vote for board members during the Annual Meeting. If you are interested in joining the board, please email president@anchorangoniclisci.com.

The potluck begins at 4 p.m. and the kickoff follows at 5. Come to the Expo and Season Kickoff, bring a dish to share, and let’s get ready to cheer on our local athletes on this season! Learn more about the event and volunteer opportunities at www.anchorangoniclisci.com/events/annual-celebration.

**AMH Cup preview**

The AMH Cup is a series of community ski events that are great for everyone from the most competitive skiers and the whole family. Kids race their first race free and it pays to sign up for the whole season. This race will feature five events, beginning with the AMH Freestyle on Sunday, December 10. If you are new to community skiing or know friends who should get in on the action, come to the AMH Cup introduction at 10 a.m. before the first race on December 10.

Learn the ins and outs of this series and more about local skiing and races. The events are also great for Jr. Nordic families!

There are a lot of families new to the local ski scene. Here are some tips on how community ski races work:

1. Register online or in person the day of the race. Or save money by registering online!
2. Choose your distance and wave for each event. Distance options can range from 5k to 30k, depending on the history of the race and snow conditions. Some are relay races – grab a friend and sign up together, or show up at the race and ask at the bib handouts for help finding a partner.
3. Grab your bib before the start (10-11:30 a.m.), check your start time, then check the map for the course and test it out on your warm-up. Fancy waxing isn’t necessary, but you can always check in with the staff at AMH if you want to learn more about kick wax and glide wax.
4. Kids: Warm up with Ready 2 Race, look for a R2R coach inside near bib pick-up. Get help waxing and
SKI TRAIN

Ski Train arrives on Saturday, March 24, 2018, but tickets on sale now! Join your fellow skiers for a day riding the train and exploring Alaska’s backcountry in Curry. Ski Train is for all ages and abilities with activities like skiing, snowshoeing, sledding and all around winter fun! This season, Ski Train has a new look! For the 2018 NSAA Ski Train, we’re offering passengers the option to choose the car they’d like to sit in. Each car has been generously sponsored by local businesses, and each car has a theme.

Tickets for the adults 21 and over only cars: $160; those cars include Car A – GlaciervBrewhouse, Theme: Caveman; Car B – Alaskan Brewing Co., Theme: Toga/Greek. Beer will be provided on the train and at an exclusive beer garden in Curry.

Tickets for Social and Family Friendly cars are $140 for adults 12+ and $115 for youth 0-11; those cars include Car D – Trek Store of Anchorage, Star Trek; Car E – Ski AK, TDB; Car F – Wild Scoops, Wild Animal Kingdom (includes Wild Scoops ice cream on the train); and Car G – Conrad Houston Insurance, The Incredible.

But that’s not all! Check out the other new Ski Train offerings:

- Youth ticket pricing: Bring the kids for an exciting day filled with fun and snow, and of course, the train ride! Youth aged 11 and under are only $115!
- Parking pass $20: Skip the hassle of looking for parking with the Ski Train parking pass! Park closest to the train in a spot reserved just for you. Only 16 left!
- Pre-sale on Ski Train exclusive merchandise! Save time by pre-ordering your official exclusive Ski Train merch when you purchase your tickets! All Ski Train merchandise will feature the new Ski Train logo.

Follow Ski Train on Facebook for updates and exclusive content. Thank you for our generous 2018 Ski Train sponsors: Matanuska Brewing Co, Glacier Brewhouse, Alaskan Brewing Co, Trek Bicycle Store, SkiAK, Wild Scoops Ice Cream, Conrad Houston Insurance, REI, and Kaladi Brothers Coffee.

Get all the details and tickets at anchorangordnicski.com/events/ski-train/. Over 200 tickets have already sold!

NSAA Junior Nordic: Putting the fun in skiing fundamentals

NSAA Junior Nordic registration closes for the first session in November, and second session is filling up fast. Jr. Nordic has had the same philosophy since it started in 1984: Cross country skiing is fun, rewarding and positive. Over 30 years later the program continues to teach healthy lifestyle that last a lifetime. The focus on fun is directly related to Jr. Nordic’s program Ready 2 Race, which is designed to bring that fun to community racing. Community races are a great activity for the whole family and a great way to motivate kids into skiing in middle school and high school. R2R coaches provide warmups for all kids (including those not a part of Ready 2 Race or Jr. Nordic) and make sure everyone gets on the starting line at the right time.

Learn more about the Jr. Nordic program, coaching and other opportunities at anchorangordnicski.com/junior-nordic-coaching.

A holiday tradition is born: Tour of Trees returns for a second season

NSAA is proud to bring back the second annual Solstice Tour of Trees, a unique Alaska celebration of winter solstice and the return of longer days! This year’s event is from 4-7 p.m. Sunday, December 17, at Kincaid Park.

As a northern community, Anchorage loves events that encourage all ages and abilities to get outside and celebrate winter. The event allows people to tour decorated trees along the first 2.5k of the Mize Loop. Local businesses will sponsor trees along the route and can decorate them to their hearts content. There’s no disguising the fact that Ski Train is fun every year!
NSAA Sponsor Spotlight: ConocoPhillips

For 24 years, ConocoPhillips has been involved with our Nordic skiing community: supporting, volunteering, funding and advocating!

What’s the connection? Why Nordic skiing? ConocoPhillips places great value on a community that is active, especially in a climate like Alaska’s. Nordic skiing is a sport that’s easy to get into, and you can do it pretty much during any time of the day or evening, thanks to the fantastic trails and NSAA’s commitment to grooming them. Most of those who work at ConocoPhillips enjoy the outdoors and the company encourages wellness and healthy activities. One way ConocoPhillips does this is with Alaska Activity Grants. For every employee that participates in an NSAA event, the company donates an additional $100 to the event or organization. When 12 or 15 employees participate in Alaska Ski For Women or the Tour of Anchorage, it adds up fast!

According to Natalie Lowman, Director of Media and Advertising for ConocoPhillips Alaska, supporting NSAA and its mission also benefits their employees and Anchorage residents. A core group of ConocoPhillips employees are avid Nordic skiers, and so are their kids, so it’s been an easy decision to support outdoor sports that promote better health and welfare. NSAA offers many Nordic events that appeal to a wide range of abilities. Olympic skiers, elite skiers, backcountry and recreational skiers, kids – you name a group and NSAA probably has an event that will fit them.

ConocoPhillips is excited to be the title sponsor for the 2018 U.S. Nationals in Anchorage this January, and the Junior Nationals in 2019. As a past sponsor of the 2009-2010 US. Nordic Ski Championships, and the Junior Nordic Championships, ConocoPhillips was pleased to be the title sponsor, and they’ve been a significant sponsor of Nordic events and organizations ever since.

Natalie says she even has a personal connection to NSAA. She had kids in Junior Nordic when they were young, she’d ride the Ski Train in the old days when it went to Grandview, and she spent multiple years skiing in the Alaska Ski For Women, which she said have all been wonderful memories for her.

Personally or corporately, NSAA and ConocoPhillips’ connection is vital to keeping Anchorage skiing.
**NSAA Partner Spotlight:** Murray Orthodontics PC

Murray Orthodontics PC believes in supporting a healthy community. Dr. John Murray personally values opportunities for children that keep them active and lead to a life-long commitment to physical health. This perfectly parallels NSAA’s mission in providing and maintaining a world class trail system and outdoor winter youth for Anchorage. Naturally, Murray Orthodontics and NSAA are a good fit!

John and his wife, Vivienne, first discovered NSAA when her own children started Junior Nordic. As they learned more about the far-reaching benefits of NSAA’s work in the winter sports community, they got involved on a more committed level.

**NSAA Volunteer of the Month:** Amy Schumacher

NSAA’s Volunteer of the Month is Amy Schumacher, who has been involved with our organization since getting connected to NSAA Junior Nordic through her kids 12 years ago. Since, she’s volunteered in a number of ways and admits to loving the variety and the community she’s supporting.

**NSAA: Years you’ve been Nordic skiing?**

Amy Schumacher: I grew up in Southern Wisconsin, where there were no school or club teams, but my parents did take me out several times per year in my red rubber boots and waxless classic skis. My spark for Nordic skiing really began in my mid-20s. I skied a Birkie one week after getting my first pair of skate skis. It wasn’t pretty, but what a fun event! Please describe your NSAA volunteer work.

I’m nowhere near the many superstars in NSAA, but I help where I can. I’ve been on the Junior Nordic committee for several years and I especially enjoy the excitement of first year skiers trying one of those tasty, colorful JN hats. As my kids moved more into racing with AWS and Service, our coach, Jan Burton, motivated my whole family to get more involved in supporting AMH Cup and high school racing, major events and trail maintenance.

**What do you love about Nordic skiing?**

My favorites are family outings on the Richter after a big snowfall or a crust ski with friends in the sunshine. We appreciate your time, energy and unique skills that you choose to be a volunteer?

I enjoy giving back to a community full of so many inspiring and energetic people and families. … I especially love watching kids having fun at races – anything from a close high school relay to a younger group building a jump on the stadium hill.

**What does NSAA’s mission mean to you?**

As a pediatrician, NSAA’s mission of encouraging healthy activities and lifestyles fits into my daily work. Play every day! Can you please talk about the importance and role that NSAA and its volunteers play in our community and state?

NSAA plays a huge role in supporting a wide range of activities, from lessons to touring or racing. I’m excited about new developments like the Solstice Tree Tour, ski-cross racing, and an Anchorage terrain park. Hopefully, these events will draw even more kids and families outdoors to enjoy the snow and trails.

Anything else about your volunteer work, skiing, NSAA or other?

I really appreciate the trails, grooming and snowmowing!
NSAA Member of the Month: Allison Showers-Chlup

NSAA is always thrilled to celebrate and thank its special members. This season, NSAA is spotlighting a handful of those supporters with short stories in the Nordic Skier. November’s NSAA Member of the Month is Allison Showers-Chlup (and her family!), who has been a Nordic skier for nearly 40 years, involved with NSAA in a variety of ways for nearly 30 years, and a steady NSAA donor for around 10 years.

NSAA: What do you love about Nordic skiing?

Showers-Chlup: I love that Nordic skiing is a life-long sport that is inclusive of all people. It encourages friends and family to get out and enjoy the beautiful Alaska winter months, and pursue an overall healthy lifestyle.

Do you have any standout moments from skiing, connecting with NSAA and/or participating in programs or events that you would like to share?

I have very fond memories of participating in Junior Nordic during my youth. It launched my love of Nordic skiing and provided the foundation for my success in high school racing and beyond. My coach, the late Bruce Hickok, impacted my life through his passion for the sport and his love of the outdoors. I still think of him often and count my blessings that I had the opportunity to work with him as a coach.

Today, I am filled with joy that my son also has the chance to participate in Junior Nordic and I look forward to the day my daughters can join him on the trails. Nordic skiing is so much more than a sport. It is a lifestyle that encourages getting outside, sharing time with family and friends, and embracing a healthy existence. I appreciate that Junior Nordic introduces children to this amazing sport, and I love that my family and I have endless kilometers of beautifully groomed trails to explore together.

We appreciate your generous support of NSAA! Why do you choose to donate to NSAA?

Through Junior Olympics and college skiing, I’ve had the opportunity to ski outside of Alaska and have always been amazed at how expensive it is to access groomed ski trails. I am so fortunate to live in a city in which the community has established public access to an incredible trail system. I feel that it is our duty to continue this legacy for our children.

Take a tour of a lifetime in Denali Park

BY BOB SUTHERLAND

Once again NSAA is offering a ski tour in Denali National Park with dog sled support from March 10–18. Participants will fly into Kantishna, load your gear onto dog sleds and start your adventure. Ski in the shadow of Denali for the week while sleeping in Park Service cabins and wood-heated tents. The dogs and sleds haul the gear; you ski with a day pack. Experience beautiful sunrises and sunsets on the North Face of Denali, star-filled nights and pack. Experience beautiful sunrises and sunsets on the North Face of Denali, star-filled nights and pack.

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National Park with dog sled support from March 10–18. Participants will fly into Kantishna, load your gear onto dog sleds and start your adventure. Ski in the shadow of Denali for the week while sleeping in Park Service cabins and wood-heated tents. The dogs and sleds haul the gear, you ski with a day pack. Experience beautiful sunrises and sunsets on the North Face of Denali, star-filled nights and pack.

Airstrip and will carpool as we can.

There will be six skiers, two mushers and about 24 dogs. Guides are experienced in traveling in winter time Alaska, and one of them has ski guided in Greenland, Antarctica and to the North Pole. Nutritious wholesome food will be provided, with guidance from you by your preferences. Generally we will travel about 10 miles per day but we may throw in a day or two in which we ski 15 miles.

Since this trip is in a new area for us, we don’t have an itinerary yet but it should be available soon. We have a slideshow to share with you electronically from a previous trip, though it illustrates our accommodations, what the trail can be like and the scenery. We have a tried and tested gear list. A pre-trip meeting will be held in late January to meet each other and answer questions.

This ski tour is open to any Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage member. Join us on this ski tour—the mountains will help make you feel small and the journey will help you sort out what is important in life. We are happy to answer any of your questions. Feel free to contact Bob Sutherland at 509-429-1082 or email him at funhog.fundogs@gmail.com.

AROUND THE BOWL

Continued from Page 3

create a winter wonderland along one of Kincaid’s most well-loved trails.

For this event only, NSAA permits people to walk as well as ski on the groomed trails, increasing participation for all. Hot beverages and snacks will be provided along the way. This is a very popular, family friendly and free event that brings together all ages, levels of fitness, and outdoor enthusiasts.

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NSAA Partner Spotlight: The Banker Law Group

We never get better at anything unless we embrace falling down every once in a while. Skiing teaches our kids this very practical reference, and for Anthony Banker, it is one reason the Banker Law Group supports NSAA programs and Nordic ski events each season. As Anthony says, “NSAA gives skiers ongoing opportunity to experience the beauty of Anchorage at a time of year when we might otherwise spend more time indoors.”

This includes all skiers: the racing kids like his teenagers and the “plodders” as Anthony describes himself. Anthony raised his kids in the Junior Nordic program, first as a volunteer parent coach in 2005 at Russian Jack when his oldest, Emory, was in kindergarten. All three of his kids followed the track, first as Polar Cubs, then progressing through the levels. Last year, Emory was a Junior Nordic coach and a SkiKu volunteer in Koyuk.

According to Anthony, Nordic skiing gets him and his family into nature and exercising during winter. It is an opportunity for some quiet and also for active socialization with other skiers.

“Some of my favorite memories with NSAA revolve around Junior Nordic,” Anthony said. “The routine and schedule of skiing with happy children in all kinds of weather is such a gift.”

Anthony said that he, his family and coworkers appreciate the Nordic trails that NSAA maintains and the opportunities they provide.

“These trails give us access to beautiful scenery, great exercise and opportunities for quiet reflection,” he added. “Nordic skiing builds community.”

For this reason, the Banker Law Group staff supports NSAA. Events like Alaska Ski for Women and Ski 4 Kids harness the community to do big things that help those in need, directly contributing funds that make a difference in our community.

The trail goes both ways: NSAA is grateful for the Banker Law Group’s continued support and could not provide the Junior Nordic program, quality trails and community events without them!”

Anthony Banker’s son, Henry, is clearly ready to go skiing!

Find the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage on Facebook at — facebook.com/anchoragenordicski
Each season, the NSAA awards a handful of talented young student-skiers with scholarships. Funds for the scholarship program come from the Sven Johansson Memorial Ski Race and the Elizabeth Tower memorial scholarship fund.

This year $5,000 in scholarship funds were awarded to five outstanding student-athletes: Zachary Bassett of Service High received the $1,000 Dr. Elizabeth Tower Memorial Scholarship; Elizabeth Mans of West High received a $1,500 NSAA Scholarship; Ruth Cvancara of Dimond High and Family Partnership Charter School received a $1,000 NSAA Scholarship; Sydney Gill of Stellar Secondary School received a $750 NSAA Scholarship; and Ryan Bickford of Stellar Secondary School received a $750 NSAA Scholarship.

Have a student in mind for a future scholarship? The NSAA Scholarship application can be found online on February 1 and will be due in March 2018.

Learn more at anchoragnordicski.com/races/asd-high-school-racing/nsaa-scholarships/.
KNSC groomers create a winter wonderland of skiing

BY JEANNIE WOODRING

Neither snow, rain nor gloom of night stop the KNSC’s groomers from making their rounds: Imagine over 80 kilometers of ski trails spread over several square miles. With steep hills, deep gullies, and sharp turns. And changing weather conditions, from strong winds to heavy snow, sleet, and rain. And you have to groom the trails daily or a couple times a week.

That’s Homer’s ski trail system. Fortunately, our cadre of skilled, dedicated volunteers know the art of grooming in this crazy, beautiful country—and create an incredible winter wonderland of skiing.

Lookout Mountain Trails: The Crown Jewel

Considered the “crown jewel” of Homer’s ski trails, Lookout Mountain’s trail system has something for everyone—up to 26K of hilly trails with tight curves for competitive skiers and flat meadows for beginners. And because of its 1,400-foot elevation, Lookout has more snow than any other ski trail system in the area...and cooler temperatures and steeper winds.

Lookout’s groomers know what to expect. “We need to have a basic understanding of present snow conditions,” says John Miles, who has groomed at Lookout for years. “I have an unending fascination with the continuous change with snow type and the machine all winter, says his fondest memory is, “the teamwork that the Lookout groomers have developed over the years. We are continuously learning from each other and apply this knowledge to produce the best skiing conditions possible.”

Longtime Lookout groomer Bill Harrison adds, “Good grooming requires the operator to read the current conditions, choose the proper equipment for those conditions, and have an eye for the finished product that will produce the best skiing opportunities for the users. Understanding how skiers use the trail is important.”

Working together has great memories for the groomers. Miles, who practically lives on his grooming machine all winter, says his fondest memory is, “the teamwork that the Lookout groomers have developed over the years. We are continuously learning from each other and apply this knowledge to produce the best skiing conditions possible.”

Lookout groomer Bill Worsfold remembers, “cold clear mornings watching the sun rise and seeing as many as a dozen moose on the trails. And working with the other Lookout groomers—we’ve had a bunch of laughs out there.”

McNeil Canyon School Trails/Eveline State Recreation Site: Vast vistas

At an elevation of 1,200 feet, McNeil had 13K of ski trails, with some nice hills and low wet areas. Connected to McNeil by a 1.6K trail, Eveline sits at 1,500 feet and has 8K of ski trails, which include nice flat runs and some gentle hills. At these elevations, the snow can be cooler but wind can wreak havoc with groomed tracks, and warm weather melts the trails at lower elevations.

Like their counterparts at Lookout Mountain, the McNeil/Eveline groomers have cleared the trails for a long time.

“Since the early 1980s,” recalls groomer John Fitzpatrick, “when we started making trails for our kids to ski.”

“At least 35 years,” adds groomer Derek Stonorov, “ever since we put in the first ski trail.”

Grooming averages about six hours a week, but can take up to 12 hours a week when conditions change or ski events are coming.

The McNeil/Eveline crew agree that skills required for grooming, says Stonorov, include “patience and the ability to drive slowly towing the right groomer for the current conditions.”

Because the area is surrounded by a lot of vacant land, the McNeil/Eveline groomers also create new trails. Nicky Starzi, who grooms 2-3 hours a week on average, spearheaded a new 6K wondrous trail, called Wolf Ridge. Both McNeil and Eveline have connectors to this new trail.

The McNeil/Eveline groomers also credit their work to the support of volunteers: the Fritz Creek General Store for fuel, which amounts to $1,000 a season, and extra plowing with a Tucker Snowcat powered by...
Baycrest Winter Trail System – Historical tracks and lots of fun

With 30K of trails in winter and elevation running from 400 feet to several hundred feet on Diamond Ridge, Baycrest is not an easy place to groom. Snow is often wetter and icier than at Lookout or McNeil/Eveline. Trails run through wetlands that get soggy in warm weather as well as steep slopes that get icy.

Dave Brann, a retired teacher, has groomed on the Kenai Peninsula since 1978. Early tracks at Baycrest were set by an Alpine snowmachine dragging a piece of plywood behind. Other times, “we made our tracks by walking in our skis or utilizing crude tracks put in once every two weeks,” he says. As skate skiing took hold, ski tracks have widened, and equipment has improved. Like their counterparts at other sites, the Baycrest groomers have learned how to pick the right equipment for dealing with changing snow conditions.

Baycrest groomers run from seven years to nearly 40 years. Groomers ride trails from 6-20 hours a week – Brann remembers a 40-hour week during one winter of heavy snow.

Experience for the Baycrest groomers runs from seven years to nearly 40 years. Groomers ride trails from 6-20 hours a week – Brann remembers a 40-hour week during one winter of heavy snow.
AROUND THE VALLEY

Grooming more than trails: New volunteers needed for MSSC

The struggle of the non-profit organization is usually twofold, revenue (often in the form of donations and grants) and volunteers. The Mat-Su Ski Club has had a board which has done a great job of finding and promoting varying streams of funding and has had a hardcore, dedicated contingent of volunteers. With these two components, the club has made some solid strides in growth in expanding skiing opportunities in the Valley and promoting our much prized sport. But as Spiderman’s Uncle said, “with great power comes great responsibility”… Some may argue that the MSSC is more powerful than Spiderman, but we definitely have more responsibility.

Circling back to our volunteers, we have a fantastic group of people who continually show up for trail work parties, race events and the like. They have shown an abundant amount of commitment to improving skiing in the Valley. As I alluded to before, the responsibilities of the club have grown and as such the commitment of our volunteers has, too.

Our hope is to begin recruiting new faces to help the old and ease the burden on the core volunteers. I’ve had conversations with a number of folks where I slyly try to work into conversation the opportunities the club has for volunteering. This is usually greeted with reasons that they are currently too busy and I don’t fault this reaction. I too have fallen victim to this response. Unfortunately though, the club, trails, ski programs and events do not exist if everyone has this response.

Obviously our club would greatly benefit from a good, new contingent of people who can volunteer multiple days a month to help our efforts, but actually we could benefit just as well if the majority of members volunteered a couple hours a season. There really are a lot of options for volunteering that may fit your schedule, preferred activity type and acceptable temperature range.

Do you like watching live sports? Great, a number of races put on by the club will give you a front row seat to the action. Maybe building activities is more up your alley? The MSSC just completed the majority of the new competition loops at GPRA, but we still need help in spring to polish them up. Or do you enjoy operating snow machines/ATVs/small equipment? Then you would find right into our groomer ranks.

And for those of you who are looking for more involved opportunities, we typically are looking for new board members on a regular basis, which is where all the action is! We also need help in areas of fund raising and grant writing, as well.

I cannot overemphasize how grateful the board and I are to all those who have helped us with grooming and maintenance of the ski trails at Independence Mine, Archangel Road, and GPRA; adult ski lessons; our Junior Nordic program; club and high school ski races; the Mat-Su Ski for Women; and the countless small and large projects we have completed to date. Thank you!

– By Hans Hill, MSSC President

TL; DR (Too Long; Didn’t Read version): All the ways to volunteer!

Please consider helping the MSSC by contacting Tammy Hill at tammy.hill@matsski.org with your interest in volunteering for the following activities. (Please include your phone number) – Ski races; grooming; events (Annual Meeting, Spring Social); Ski for Women; races; general work parties; board of directors; Junior Nordics Steering Committee and activities; Junior Nordics coaches (contact Dave at dave.musgrave@matsski.org); fundraising; and more.

Thank you to all our current and future volunteers!

New Competition Loops this season

The waiting game begins for snow to accumulate… The construction for the new 5K at GPRA is done for the season and will allow skiing this season. To date, there have been zero skiers on these trails… the opportunity to be the very first should come very soon. If you are looking to be one of the first, pay attention to the weather and our website for grooming updates.

It’s important to recognize Mark Strabel, Lucas Parker, Ed Strabel and Dave Werner for their tireless efforts on the Competition Loops this past summer. Together they logged more than 800 hours of volunteer time on excavators, dozers and ski steers and behind chainsaws, representing more than $35,000 of in-kind donations. Please step them on the trail and give them a big thank you.

Icicle Double on December 30-31

Our perennial hallmark event is set to occur the last weekend of the year. The event will truly be an all new event with the addition of the new trails at GPRA. The Icicle Double is a 2-day race event with classic style and format.

Please visit our website for race and registration details.

Upcoming events

Saturday, Nov. 4 – Race to the Outhouse #1 (Independence Mine or Archangel Rd) 10 – 30 a.m.
Sunday, Nov. 12 – Tours start, location TBA
Saturday-Sunday, November 18-19 – UAA-UAF ski meet, GPRA (weather permitting), times TBD
Saturday, December 2 – Moonlight Ski, 7 p.m., Independence Mine to Fred Timble’s Cabin
Friday-Saturday, December 2-3 – Mat-Su Invite high school ski races, GPRA, need volunteers, Community/Junior Nordic race on Saturday
Tuesday and Thursdays, December 5-March 1 – Adult Ski Lessons – 6 – 45 p.m.
December 9-February 24 – Adult Ski Lessons (10 a.m.-noon Saturdays, location depends on conditions)
Saturday-Sunday, December 30-31 – Icicle Races, Government Peak Nordic Area, 5K, 10K, 20K, 30K; classic on Saturday, freestyle on Sunday

AROUND THE BAY

Continued from Page 10

FEBRUARY

Junior Nordic Program — 1-2:30 p.m. Saturdays, February 3, 10, 17 and 24 at Lookout Mountain State Recreation Area. Other locations TBD.

Ski/Walk/Run for Women — Sunday, February 4 at Lookout Mountain State Recreation Area. This event is sponsored by Haven House. Costumes are encouraged with prizes for a variety of categories. The fee for participating goes to Haven House, and larger donations are always welcome. The KNSC is paid a fee for grooming and organizing the event.

Backcountry Film Festival — Dates and details TBD. 7 p.m. at Homer Theater. The Winter Backcountry Film Festival is co-sponsored by the Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition and the Winter Wildlands Alliance. Films are part of a joint competition.

MARCH

KNSC Nordic Ski Marathon — Saturday, March 10, Lookout Mountain Ski Trails (starting line). Depending on the snow, the race will start at Lookout Mountain, and the route will depend on snowfall between now and then. Check the website and Facebook at Kachemak Nordic Ski Club for updates and more information.

Sea to Ski – TBA, based on snow. Say “adios” to the winter with this fun sea to ski triathlon. It includes 5K run, 10 mile bike and 5K ski. It can be done individually or as a team. For details, check out the KNSC website or Facebook page closer to March.

K A C H E M A K

Wine and Cheese and Wooden Ski Tour — Noon-4 p.m. Sunday, February 11, at location TBD. Participants are encouraged to use their wooden skis and/or dress in classic costume. Time to dig out those wool knickers, wool socks, wooden skis and/or dress in classic costume. No noon-4 p.m. Sunday, February 11, at location TBD. Participants are encouraged to use their wooden skis and/or dress in classic costume. Time to dig out those wool knickers, wool socks, wooden skis and/or dress in classic costume.

FEBRUARY 17-19, 2018

H A R V E N

A WINTER RACE IN REMOTE FROZEN ALASKA
CERNSC dedicates Ski the Beach event to Erin Johnson; race set for February 25

The Chugiak Eagle River Ski Club has a long tradition of holding a spring fun race called Ski the Beach on the last Sunday in February. Kids and adults ski around sporting “beach” outfits and leis while the Beach Boys music wafts through the birch trees. This season, the ski club is honoring the memory of a popular local skier with the Erin Johnson Memorial Ski the Beach race on Sunday, February 25. All proceeds from the race will go to the Erin K. Johnson Memorial Fund.

A lifelong Alaskan, Erin grew up hiking and skiing in the Chugach Mountains with her parents, Barb and Steve Johnson. She skied for Mirror Lake Middle School and Chugiak High School, graduating in 2007, and represented Alaska at the Junior Olympics in both 2006 and 2007. She studied at the University of Alaska Anchorage and later the University of Montana, where she graduated with a BS in Geology. Erin married her partner Abe Schmidt less than two weeks before her death.

“Being outside, exploring wild and remote places with her best friend and husband Abe, her parents Barb and Steve, and her extended family of friends and loved ones was one of her favorite joys,” her family said.

Erin explored more corners of Alaska through personal and work trips than most people could dream up in a lifetime. She hiked, backpacked, packrafted, mountain biked and skied her way around Alaska and the world. Her favorite ski race was the Ossik Classic as she could indulge her love of dressing up in silly costumes. While Erin continued to Nordic ski when she moved to Anchorage and skied Arctic to Indian.

Her enthusiasm for adventure and competence in the backcountry made her an ideal partner for any trip, and she is deeply missed by a huge network of family and friends.

The Erin K. Johnson Memorial Fund, aimed at connecting youth with the outdoors and science education, has been established in her memory. Visit and give at https://alaskacf.org/blog/funds/erin-k-johnson-memorial-fund/

EAGLE RIVER JUNIOR NORDIC/MASTER’S SIGN-UP & SKI SWAP

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Girdwood Nordic Ski Club
Girdwood, Alaska

From Coastal Trail to Girdwood Trail

BY DEB ESSEX
Girdwood Nordic Ski Club

Last week, the Girdwood Nordic Ski Club installed four beams for two new bridges along the winter trail system. Although this bridge is new to us, it’s had plenty of use within the Municipality of Anchorage. These beams were glulams removed from the Sisson bridge on the Coastal Trail. They were salvaged, cut in half, transported to Girdwood, stored at Alyeska Resort, cut again, and repurposed for our little bridges behind the Chapel of our Lady of the Snows.

This enormous effort was spearheaded by Brian Burnett, and generously helped out by The Boutet Company, Roger Hickel Contracting Inc., Jim Braham and Alaska Demolition. This entire project would have stalled if not for Alaska Demolition. Locally, the beams were prepped on Alyeska Resort property and then helicoptered on-site by Alpine Air Alaska. How else do you move four, 35-foot beams weighing 2200 pounds each over a creek surrounded by wetlands?

The bridges were designed by Josh Zellmer with R&M Consultants, and are being constructed by Craig Schubert and crew. The pilings were expertly driven by Charlie Ross with Pilings Plus, and the ground work and landscaping has been contracted with Andy Hehnlin. All of our local contractors are happy to see repurposed material used in a community project instead of being scrapped.

This entire project would not have been possible without the generosity of the Doug Knutson Family and the Nordic community donations contributed in Doug’s memory. Doug was active in the Nordic Community and we are very honored to replace the damaged bridges with a new safe creek crossing in his honor. We are grateful to Donna Knutson, David Knutson and all the support securing this project and helping maintain the Girdwood multi-use trail system for generations to come.

Once completed, the bridges will be newly named after Doug … from Sisson to Knutson … Thank you to all!!

EAGLE RIVER

CERNSC upcoming events!
Sunday, Oct 22 — Noon-3 p.m., ERJN Ski Waxing at Beach Lake Chalet
Saturday, Nov 11 — 9 a.m.-Noon, Eagle River Ski Swap and ERJN Ski Rentals at Beach Lake Trails Chalet
Saturday, Nov 18 — 1-3 p.m., ERJN Ski Rentals and 2pm Kick-Off/Parent Meeting at Beach Lake Trails Chalet
Monday, December 4 — ERJN Starts

Come join us on ski tours
CERNSC is planning some informal ski tours on Sunday afternoons during the 2017-18 season. Possible tours include: Eagle River from Briggs Bridge; Peters Creek trail; Symphony Lake and Eagle River Nature Center. Some experienced folks

Eagle River Master’s program on December 5, but pre-season sessions start in November. Register now at www.alaskanordicracing.org/master_eaglenews.html. The Masters calendar is listed at https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_T9Uol_lLMkSGs2NGxITFHZmMTA/view?usp=sharing.

Chugiak Eagle River Nordic Ski Club volunteers help at Boo at the Beach
Adult and teen volunteers from Chugiak/Eagle River Nordic Ski Club helped make Parks and Recs’ annual Boo at the Beach event a huge success this year. Hundreds of children accompanied by their parents attended this event at the Beach Lake Trails Chalet. Club volunteers hosted a booth with Bean Bag Toss, Soccer and Bowling events. Meanwhile, other volunteers helped with the Haunted Trails.

Alyssa Beiersgrohslein hands out candy while Jason Dennis runs the Bean Bag Toss

Eagle River Masters starts December 5
We’re looking forward to another great season with masters skiers. Kati Rehm is starting the official
Q&A with Michelle “Chel” Ethun

Q: How are you involved with the NSCF?

I have two kids in the FXC program. One in Comp and one in Prep. I am also a Jr. Nordics coach and am currently sharing the position as Parent Volunteer Coordinator for FXC.

Q: How long have you been a cross-country skier? What do you remember about your first time on skis?

I grew up in Wisconsin and have always loved winter. I don’t remember learning to ski but I do remember skiing with friends in the farm fields. My grandmother gave me my first pair of skis when I was in middle school. I used to ski up and down the road to their cabin in Northern Wisconsin. They were three-pin bindings and fish-scale skis.

In high school I was a competitive runner and skied during the winter to stay in shape. Skate skiing was becoming a big thing so I took my three-pin bindings and scale skis and attempted to skate. I’m sure it looked funny by today’s standards and of course, it meant I developed some really bad technique and habits but I still made a go of it.

Q: What do you like about cross-country skiing?

It is truly a life-long sport that is adaptable for anyone. If you are interested in a nice day out in the woods, you can put on skis and just go. If you are interested in speed or finesse, you can spend years working on the little kinks, balance techniques or other nuances. It’s really what you make of it.

I like the challenge. For me, becoming an efficient skier requires full body fitness. It’s fun to be able to take on that challenge as a middle-aged adult. I like working on balance and strength and I like how it feels when it all comes together. It also makes us “oldies” feel good when we can stay almost as active as our crazy high school and middle school kids.

Q: Where do you like to cross-country ski and why?

I spend most of my ski time at Birch Hill largely because that is where my kids are practicing but also because the ski trails are so well cared for and the grooming is fantastic. I like the lit trails. We joke in Fairbanks that at times in the middle of the darkest part of winter that Birch Hill is less about solitude on beautiful trails but rather a hot social scene. The ability to leave from work in the dark and ski 15K under the lights is a draw for many people and as such, a work out turns into many, “Hello, how are you doing?”, and other chit chat.

Fairbanks is also blessed with so many other ski trails. I really enjoy UAF for the rolling terrain and great classic trails. The Skarland Trail system feels like a quaint ski through the neighborhood and the Goldstream Trails have their own unique back woody feel.

We live in Two Rivers and I absolutely love skiing the trails there. They are quiet and have a nice variety from trails wide enough to skate at the school to backcountry trails that take you back to the Chena Recreation Area.

Q: When and why did you move to Fairbanks? What do you like about living in Fairbanks?

We moved to Fairbanks seven years ago when I took a position with BLM. Fairbanks is such a warm and welcoming community. I was immediately struck with how active people were. Our office is downtown and I see people running, biking, skiing and biking at all temperatures.

My husband is an artist and we found that the diversity of Fairbanks, the presence of the university and, in some ways, our remoteness creates a very colorful and close knit community. It is just big enough to have great music, great art, good food and fantastic amenities and just small enough to be able to take advantage of all of those things and still get some peace and quiet.

It is a great place to raise kids and we feel very blessed to have FXC as a program. Our kids have hiked mountains, camped, played in the rain and ran and biked through the mud without complaining and developed a great sense of appreciation for the place they live and being fit. It has truly colored our experience here and has shaped their youth. I often wonder how they would answer the second question above 30 years from now and I imagine their answers will be pretty awesome.

Q: What other activities do you enjoy besides skiing?

We like to camp and backpack and take advantage of every opportunity we can to explore. I still run and have really enjoyed Fairbanks’ trail running community. I was an avid paddler in the Midwest and my first love is still water so I hope to tackle packrafting. I’m too chicken to do much more than mountain bike the Denali Park Road but the temptation for a fat bike does linger. All in all, it sounds like I have been bitten by the Fairbanks adventure bug.
Generosity important for NSCF programs

BY ERIC TROYER

As we prepare for another cross-country ski season, please consider donating to the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. We have two programs that rely on the generosity of others.

Trail Grooming Fund
Imagine if you came to the Birch Hill Recreation Area and only a few of the trails were groomed. Or none. Many people mistakenly think that the Fairbanks Borough pays for trail grooming. It does not. All trail grooming is paid for by the NSCF, and our grooming program relies mostly on donations.

Unfortunately, donations to our trail grooming program are not keep ing up with costs. Our grooming crew is one of the best in the nation, but they need our help. When you sign up for NSCF membership, please remember to make a donation to the Trail Fund.

If you have already signed up and forgot to make a donation, it’s not too late. You can still make a donation. Go to the NSCF website (www.nscfairbanks.org) and click on “Trail Donation” under the Join dropdown menu or download a Membership Form (which doubles as a Trail Fund donation form) under Forms. You can also feed the Iron Horse, the large iron pole in front of the red Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center, by putting in cash or checks. If you pay with a check, make it out to “NSCFairbanks – Trail Fund.”

NSCF-FXC
FXC (Fairbanks Cross Country) is the club’s junior race-training program. These young athletes benefit from a variety of experiences including goal setting, confidence building, and learning to live healthy lives. They learn to understand and appreciate what can be accomplished with dedication and long-term focus. Many FXC athletes compete in races across the state and nation, acting as the face of NSCF at these events. They take that representation seriously and have done us proud, competing hard and behaving responsibly.

The more we can support them, the easier it is for them to concentrate on doing the best they can.

To make FXC available to a wide variety of families, tuition rates are kept as low as possible. However, this means tuition covers only about 60 percent of the cost of the program. The rest comes from fundraising.

Friends of FXC is a large part of that effort. Almost the entire proceeds of Friends of FXC go directly to program support. If you would like to become a member of Friends of FXC, please contact Eric Troyer (455-6641; fbxskierparent@gmail.com).

AROUND THE INTERIOR

The Alaska Nordic Skier in your inbox!
Get your Alaska Nordic Skier online and the links below are just a click away. To get only a PDF version, or both a PDF and printed version, please send an email request to nordicskiereditor@gmail.com. You can also get PDF versions at www.anchoragenordicski.com/newsletters.htm. Getting the newsletter online only saves our club money, too!

NSCF calendar keeps you updated
Remember to check the NSCF Calendar for upcoming club events. The ski season will be getting busy soon. You can check competition events, social activities and more. Visit nsccfairbanks.org for more! You can also “like” the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks on Facebook to keep up with local events.

Freeze Up Funk Fest on November 4
Bring your disco shoes and come dance to the rhythms of Shagg and help raise funds for FXC. Jerome Physical Therapy and HB Reuter Engineering present the Freeze Up Funk Fest, which takes place from 8 p.m. to midnight, November 4, at the Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; $20 at the door — beer, wine and snacks available for donation.

NSCF 50th anniversary — Youth Ski Challenge
The 2017-2018 ski season marks the 50th year of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. We are encouraging kids in grades K-6 to get out on the trails to help us celebrate by skiing 50 kilometers this season! Ski with a friend, parent or coach and keep track of your distance — you will be surprised how far you ski! Registration information will be available at the Junior Nordics table at Ski Fest on November 11 and will be distributed to local elementary schools and ski clubs. There are awards for all finishers and each grade level! Those that complete the challenge will be entered into a drawing for fun ski gear to be awarded in March.

Ski Fest celebrates UAF Ski Team, NSCF and the season ahead on November 11

BY KATE CAREY

On Saturday, November 11, the Alaska Nanooks cross-country ski team of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks will celebrate the return of snow and the start of a fun new ski season! Ski Fest will be held at the Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center starting at 1 p.m. Bring your friends and your skis, or you can take advantage of free ski rentals courtesy of REI and take a quick lesson with Nanook skiers.

Those attending are asked to bring a dessert to share. Inside the ski center, you can learn about many NSCF programs including adult lessons, Junior Nordics, FXC, competition races, ski tours and trail information. The Nanooks will also be accepting new and renewing memberships for the UAF Ski Team Booster Club.

The Alaska Nanooks ski team will also ski in groups or you can enjoy an early season ski on your own. REI will also be outside with yummy s’mores to help us celebrate the return of winter. Following your ski, join the Alaska Nanooks inside for introductions of the 2017-2018 ski team and stick around for awesome door prizes.

COACH TRYING TO FIND VIDEO

OF A SKIER WITH HIPS FAR ENOUGH FORWARD

Follow @crosscountryskimemes on Instagram for more!
Why choose physical therapy?

BY ZUZANA ROGERS
PT, SC, SCS, COMT
Advanced Physical Therapy

October is National Physical Therapy Month, an opportunity to highlight the benefits of physical therapy with regards to physical performance and active lifestyles.

Physical therapists, or PTs, are movement experts. We can identify, diagnose and treat movement problems, whether they are due to pain, weakness, stiffness, balance and dizziness, just to name a few.

➤ Are you suffering from knee pain when running downhill? We have several easy tricks to help you.
➤ Are you suffering from back pain when classic skiing, standing or walking, and does it get better when you sit down? We can help with that.
➤ Is tendinitis giving you trouble; you tried to rest it without results? We are there for you.
➤ Do you have questions about your current workout program? How about training without injuring yourself? We can answer those.
➤ Do you need someone to assess your double-poling, running, hiking or movement patterns? We can also do that.

PTs evaluate clients as one whole, synergistic system and adapt treatment accordingly to help you reach your goals. Our toolbox is deep; it includes clinical diagnosis, manual therapy, dry needling, modalities and exercise training targeted to your needs. This will help you with recovery from an injury, decrease pain, improve mobility and strength, and optimize performance.

Moreover, we are a part of your community – we are skiers, runners and active Alaskans. We like to fish, bike or just relax and read a book. We are there on the sidelines cheering as you cross the finish line. We don a bib and stand with you on the start line. We are exhausted and happy at the race’s end. We are a part of our active community and we love it.

Did you know that in Alaska you are able to see a physical therapist directly, without physician’s referral? We are able to assess the issues you are dealing with and refer to other medical professions, if needed. We have excellent working relationships with local physicians and other health care specialists.

#ChoosePT #aptofalaska