ANCHORAGE:
Good times, great cause – Alaska Ski for Women

ALASKA:
Olympian inspires Alaska’s young high-flyers

KACHEMAK:
Eveline a local favorite and special tribute

ANCHORAGE:
Picture perfect – NSAA Photo Contest

KACHEMAK/FAIRBANKS:
Ski Your Age, not your boot size
This community rallies for its teams, kids and trails

_message from the NSAA staff and board of directors_

It was strange timing that the annual NSAA annual meeting and season kickoff celebration brought together many Nordic groups to celebrate skiing and rally around the University of Alaska Nordic Skiing crisis. The outcome of not cutting Nordic skiing isn’t surprising after witnessing the overwhelming support from the community. UAA and APU skiers, coaches and families joining the festivities shows the unity and strength in Nordic numbers in our community. It is vital that we keep skiing a strong part of our local culture, even with difficult snow years.

This is a volatile financial climate for Alaska. Budgets are lean and stressed, NSAA’s included. But consider this: NSAA is at an advantage in that the organization is empowered by our supporters and our ski community. NSAA faces fluctuating membership numbers and trail support income, however NSAA will continue providing quality trails and Nordic programs for our community. We are not reliant on university budgets or municipality payroll. NSAA remains committed to keep Anchorage skiing because of our donors.

Our coaches are also vital to keeping Anchorage skiing and our kids active, especially without snow. NSAA coaches show phenomenal flexibility, continuous spontaneity, extraordinary encouragement even on the worst weather days and amazing commitment to our youth. Our Junior Nordic, Ski Jumping and Biathlon programs miraculously get kids excited about being outside and active no matter the conditions. Coaches keep participants moving, giving them fun options like yard games, scavenger hunts or orienteering activities.

Sometimes ski groups meet at different locations to give kids new experiences. The creativity, optimism and energy from our coaches, particularly the Junior Nordic Site Directors who feel much of the pressure, is incredible.

Thank you to our Nordic coaches – you are on the front line of instilling a love for being active and healthy for Anchorage’s youth and we are so grateful to you! And you are fueling the future of amazing ski community.

**AROUND THE BOWL**

Celebrate Solstice, skis and wonderful trees on December 18

Anchorage residents, Nordic skiers and families will take any opportunity to celebrate and play outside during our long, dark winters. The Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage has a new way to have fun during the darkest days: the first annual Solstice Tree Tour, a uniquely Alaskan celebration of Winter Solstice from 4-7 p.m. Sunday, December 18, at Kincaid Park.

The free event encourages all ages, levels of fitness, and outdoor enthusiasts. Want more information? Does your business want to sponsor a tree? Want to volunteer? Contact Sara Miller at akssarmiller@gmail.com or call NSAA at 276-7609.

**Sponsors like the Trek Store are adding flavor to 2017 Ski Train**

Community partners are adding new flavor to this season’s NSAA Ski Train and it’s not too late to join the fun. Raffle tickets to win a free Farley Fat Bike donated by the Trek Store of Anchorage will be on sale and the winning ticket will be drawn on the return ride to Anchorage. Trek will also feature a fleet of fat bikes to demo on a short obstacle course, the first of its kind in Curry, Alaska.

REI will return with snowshoes to loan, a beacon search activity and an avalanche pack deployment demonstration. Kaladi Brothers Coffee returns to caffeinate with quality espresso. About 200 tickets are left.

Every winter, this special day and unique Alaska event brings together skiers and outdoors enthusiasts to celebrate winter in an unforgettable way: a journey to a remote, abandoned town, an old railroad whistle stop, on the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage’s Ski Train. This season’s train departs on March 11.

Ski Train is not just for expert backcountry skiers nor even reserved for adventurous types. This day is enjoyed by all levels and ages of cross-country Nordic skiers as well as snowshoers, parents and kids with sleds, telemark skiers taking powdery See **AROUND THE BOWL** Page 3
**AROUND THE BOWL**

Continued from Page 2

turns, and even friends, families and coworkers enjoying a fun getaway train ride.

The 200-mile journey aboard the Alaska Railroad offers spectacular views of Denali and wildlife along the Susitna River as it travels to the Curry whistle stop. Along the way, a Polka band rounds the cars playing tunes adding to the fun and festive vibe. Most people bring food and drink to enjoy on the way to and from Curry.

NSAA’s Ski Train sells out annually; tickets are $140 apiece. Purchase tickets and learn more about Ski Train at www.anchoragenordicski.com/ski_train_details.htm.

Where there’s a will, there’s a **Tour of Anchorage**

If there’s something the last two years of the Tour of Anchorage has proven to us, it’s that there will be a race this season on March 5. Last year’s Tour Festival was a big hit.

**The 200-mile journey aboard the Alaska Railroad offers spectacular views of Denali and wildlife along the Susitna River as it travels to the Curry whistle stop.**

With a 30k ski race, a ski-cross race, and a fat tire bike race all rolled into one great event (not to mention a beer garden, a portable hot tub and a portable sauna). So while our eyes are still on the prize of a cross-city multi-distance event, we will continue to host a spectacular day. For details and to register, visit www.anchoragenordicski.com/tours/tour-of-anchorage.

They are still getting outside for fun and skill building! Spaces are still available for second session. Register your young skier today at www.anchoragenordicski.com/junior-nordic.

**NSAA Backcountry Tours return with a season of adventure, exploration, snow and fun**

Below is the complete schedule of NSAA Backcountry Tours for the 2016-2017 season. Based on prior low snow seasons, we may need to change the location of the ski tour and will let folks know on the web (www.anchoragenordicski.com/programs/backcountry-tours/), by email and on the Tours Hotline at (907) 248-6667, ext. 4. We look forward to skiing with you!

**December 9:** Friday Night Fun Ski or “Ski and Suds” — Location TBD

Come out for a social ski at 6:30 p.m. on a Friday night followed by a beer (or two!) This happens back to the olden days of the NSAA Friday Night Fun Ski. Bring warm clothes and a headlamp. We will decide where to meet and ski based on conditions. Tour leader: Mary Vavrik, 306-7686.

**December 17:** Solstice Ski at Turnagain Pass, portion of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) from Turnagain Pass to Ingram Creek

Celebrate Winter Solstice and the returning of light by enjoying a great ski on a part of the INHT. This tour is appropriate for a beginner to intermediate skier who can travel about eight miles round-trip on relatively flat terrain and is able to negotiate short climbs and downhill on a narrow trail under various snow conditions. Meet at the Chugach State Park Headquarters (by the train south of Potter Marsh) at 9 a.m. Call the Tour hotline at 248-6667 ext. 4 for updates. Tour leader: Mary Vavrik, 306-7686.

**January 14:** Center Ridge, AT/Teleski

Turnagain Pass ski camp Center Ridge past the weather station, climbing 1,000 feet in two miles. The climbing requires both skins for your skis. You should also have avalanche gear (beacon, shovel and probe). Once the climb is gained, the ridge is practically flat with some easy ups and downs. This is a great tour for those want an introduction into telemark or AT skiing. There are safe alternatives for returning to the car, however you may have to perform kick-turns if you are not proficient tuning on your touring skis. Because the weather is often variable, bring clothing for wind, cold and snow. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Chugach State Park Headquarters parking lot (by the train south of Potter Marsh). Tour leader: Kelin Lag Gillmion, telmarkski@yahoo.com.

**January 28:** Nancy Lakes Parkway Trails, Mat-Su Valley

Ski 10 miles of rolling terrain through beautiful forested hills and open frozen swamps on the Parkway, Jana Pond and Rhe Lake Loops. There are a couple of steep hills that can easily be negotiated, if needed. Meet at Cars Mudson bakery located at Mudderdon and Northern Lights at 9 a.m. and then carpool to the winter trailhead at Mile 2.2 of the Nancy Lake Parkway. It can be very cold here, just a few miles north of Anchorage, so dress appropriately. A Chugach State Park Pass is required; a self-service food station is located at the parking lot. Tour leader: Patti Phillips, 240-3742.

**Cabin fever? Get out of town and stay in Hope!**

Take a break from holiday cooking and shopping and get to the NSAA cabin in Hope! The cozy cabin is available to rent year-round for only $50 a night. Many nights are available throughout December. Book online at www.anchoragenordicski.com/cabin-rental.

**NSAA calendar of events**

**DECEMBER**

**Saturday, December 3 — ASD High School Freestyle Snowball Race, Service High**

**Sunday, December 4 — Biathlon Race #1, Kincaid Park**

**Friday, December 9 — ASD High School Lynx Loppet, Kincaid Park**

**Friday, December 9 — NSAA Tours Friday Night Fun Ski, TBD**

**Saturday, December 10 — ASD High School Lynx Loppet, Kincaid Park**

**Sunday, December 11 — AMH Anchorage Cup — Free Sprint**

**Sunday, December 11 — Biathlon Race #2, Kincaid Park**

**Saturday, December 17 — Besh Cup #1, Kincaid Park**

**Saturday, December 17 — Solstice Ski, Iditarod National Historic Trail**

**Sunday, December 18 — Besh Cup #2, Kincaid Park**

**Thursday, December 22 — Biathlon Race #3, Kincaid Park**

**Saturday, December 31 — Annual Speedskate/Skate Ski Duathlon**

**JANUARY 2017**

**TBA — First ASD Middle School Practice Starts**

**Saturday, January 7 — Last Day Junior Nordic Session #1**

**Sunday, January 8 — AMH Anchorage Cup — Hickock Duathlon**

**Sunday, January 8 — Biathlon Race #4 Monday, January 9-10 Junior Nordic equipment return**

**Saturday, January 14 — NSAA Backcountry Tour — Center Ridge AT/Teleski, Turnagain Pass**

**Saturday, January 14 — ASD High School West Relay, Chugach**

**Saturday-Sunday, January 14-15 — ABA Race Sunday, January 15 — AMH Anchorage Cup — Team Sprint**

**Tuesday, January 17 — Junior Nordic Session #2 starts**

**Tuesday and Thursday, January 17 and 19 — Ski Jumping Session #2 starts**

**Wednesday, January 18 — ASD High School West Relay — Bartlett**

**Saturday, January 21 — Besh Cup #3 — Homer Sunday, January 22 — Besh Cup #4 — Homer Sunday, January 22 — Biathlon Race #5 Thursday, January 26 — ASD High School Skiathlon, Kincaid Park**

**Saturday, January 28 — NSAA Backcountry Tour — Nancy Lakes Parkway Trails, Mat-Su Valley**

**Sunday, January 29 — AMH Anchorage Cup — Par’s Classic**

For more events and details, visit the NSAA calendar at www.anchoragenordicski.com/calendar.
Skiing for fun and a purpose
Alaska Ski for Women participants battle the cycle of domestic violence

BY JENNY DI GRAPPA
ALASKA SKI FOR WOMEN DIRECTOR

Over the past several years, significantly low snow levels have greatly impacted the number of participants in the annual Alaska Ski for Women fundraiser. However, low snow levels have certainly not impacted the great time had by all at the festivities, nor has it taken away from the reason numerous women participate: to help battle the cycle of domestic violence in Alaska.

After the race began in 1997, it was decided that future races would raise funds and awareness for a problem experienced by thousands of women in Alaska. In fact, half of women who reside in Alaska have experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence or both according to the UAA Justice Center Alaska Victimization Survey (http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/avs).

Each year, agencies across the state have the opportunity to apply for a grant from the Alaska Ski for Women, which is overseen by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage. One multi-year grant recipient, the AWAIC shelter, has used the funds to support a full-time children’s advocate for over seven years, one of three at the agency. Over half of the residents at the AWAIC shelter are children, many of whom have witnessed domestic violence in the home. AWAIC states, “Children that have witnessed violence in the home are at higher risk of suffering from depression, anxiety disorders and learning difficulties, and can face serious challenges as they enter adulthood that can include continuing the cycle of violence. The Children’s Program at AWAIC addresses the special needs of this group.”

A 2015 grant recipient, the YWCA Alaska, used its funds to support a portion of the 2015-2016 Youth Circle Program. The purpose of the Youth Circle Program is to develop skills that directly impact a young person’s ability to thrive, including: increased positive self-identity, connection to a supportive adult, and an increased sense of belonging.

Several years ago I served as a Girls Circle Facilitator and saw firsthand the growth and development of these youth as a result of the program curriculum. This program provides them an opportunity to understand healthy and unhealthy relationships at an important time in their development. During the 2015-2016 school year, YWCA Alaska served 414 youth in 39 circles at three community centers and 14 schools, 11 of which were Title 1 schools within the Anchorage School District.

Ski for Women, Sunday, February 5: Register, and get your costumes ready, now!

This year’s Alaska Ski for Women will again include timed freestyle and classic races, and a non-timed party wave. We are expecting another amazing costume parade and contest, where prizes will be awarded to the best dressed individual and team. Food and drinks will be provided, and attendees will have a chance to bid on some great silent auction item.

Whether you come out for the skiing, the party wave or to support this enormously important cause, know that 100 percent of your race entry and any additional donations you may provide are given out to organizations who are working to stop the cycle of domestic violence and help victims overcome their experiences.
Demong offers local youth a golden opportunity

BY KAREN COMPTON

Olympic gold and silver medalist Billy Demong brought his medals and a message to Anchorage school kids last month: The future of Nordic Combined is right here in Alaska.

Demong visited five elementary schools and spoke to over 500 students during his week in Anchorage. As they passed around his gold and silver medals from the 2010 Vancouver games, Demong introduced the kids to one of the oldest and yet least-known winter sports.

Nordic Combined combines ski jumping and cross-country skiing. Competitors take one jump and receive a score based on style and distance. Then they skate ski in a pursuit race with the winner of the jumping competition starting first followed by the other competitors in order of the jump results. The first skier to cross the finish line wins.

Demong dominated the sport, competing in five Olympics: Nagano, Salt Lake City, Torino, Vancouver and Sochi. He also has nine World Cup victories and is the first American to win an Olympic gold medal in a Nordic skiing event.

Now he is the executive director of USA Nordic Sports, the national organization for ski jumping and Nordic combined. His visit here was for recruiting but also for fact-finding. Demong would like to develop the potential of Nordic combined in Alaska, taking advantage of Anchorage’s cross-country trails and programs, and adding to it NSAA’s Ski Jumping program with its certified coaches, snowmaking, upgraded facility and ability to train in the summer.

His wish list for Alaska includes an annual national camp and competition held at the Karl Eid Jumps in the summer; Anchorage hosting the 2018 U.S. Nationals in men’s and women’s ski jumping and men’s Nordic combined; more club growth for Anchorage; and some day soon, a pipeline of ski jumpers and Nordic combiners producing athletes for the national team.

NSAA’s ski jumping program has room for a few more kids this season. Learn more at www.anchagenordicski.com/ski-jumping or contact Karen Compton at kcompton@geci.net.

PHOTO BY VIVIENNE MURRAY

Billy Demong and a young fan pose with Demong’s gold and silver medals from the 2010 Vancouver Games at the NSAA Annual Celebration at Kincaid Park.

KINCAID PARK

Sunday, December 18th @ 4-7pm

Tour beautifully decorated trees on skis or on foot one time only! Bring the whole family and celebrate the returning of the sun!

Proud to Support NSAA and Anchorage skiers!

Offering a large menu of salads, appetizers, grilled chicken, sandwiches, gardenburgers, sweet ice cream treats and more!

Call 248-3058 for orders to go or visit www.aktasteefreez.com

Wear your NSAA Trail pin to Tastee Freez and save 10%!
Fun, fundraising and finds at the NSAA Ski Swap and Season Kickoff

It isn’t officially Nordic ski season in Southcentral Alaska until the NSAA Ski Swap and Season Kickoff! And this season’s event as a blast and a success.

What a crowd at the Ski Swap! Who knew swapping gear could be so much fun and efficient? What an operation with sales lasting just at two hours, close to 130 consignors, over 460 items sold, nearly 300 transactions and gear worth over $25,000 sold. Thank you to the countless and tireless volunteers who contribute so much energy and time into this community event that brings the old and the young, the expert and the beginners.

Ski Swap proceeds go right into our Anchorage trails. Year-round maintenance is essential to providing quality skiing with minimal snow. The tradition of trading up and swapping down as skill levels change or kids grow brings a community together for a great cause. Smiles from kids and thumbs up from parents were evident celebrating great prices and selection. Thanks for keeping your Anchorage trails great at the ski swap!

Known as the best potluck in town, this year’s NSAA’s Season Kickoff had a celebratory vibe, welcoming new and returning NSAA members. Highlights from this festive Nordic ski tradition included last season’s highlights and this season’s preview, an NSAA financial report, trail work update, snowmaking statistics and the election of two new board members.

Raffle tickets to win a free Farley Fat Bike donated by the Trek Store of Anchorage were on sale, drawing in many to beat the odds for this cool ride valued at close to $3,000. The evening also included many fabulous door prizes from many supporters in a community including AMH, Trek Store, Broken Tooth, G Street Fox, Alaska Huts, Sheep Mountain Lodge and Great Harvest Bread Co.

Thank you to all who attended as ski swappers and celebration participants. A special thank you to all of the volunteers who helped in so many ways. And an extra-special thank you to all who joined NSAA as members or renewed their memberships! You are making NSAA’s programs strong and Anchorage’s trails sustainable!

Miss the party?
You still have an opportunity to join and support NSAA. Register for NSAA membership starting at levels as low as $35 per season! Register today at www.anchoragenordicski.com/membership/.

No snow, but still so much to be thankful for

BY BILL BRION
NSAA OPERATIONS

Wow, what a rollercoaster ride! Nobody saw it coming. Could it get any sweeter than late October skiing? Yet here we are in mid-November with a bit of ice and lots of dirt. Some people are really bummed, some angry. I see potential and good times ahead.

As I write this article the weather guessers have us cooling off for the foreseeable future. The word “snow” even appears, not forcibly but in a conciliatory way. My buddy Craig tells me it’s time to get to work and push the Techno Alpin green button.

After a summer of sitting, the snowmaking system has had its issues, but seems ready to deliver. Volunteers Tim Brabets and Jack Porter have been testing the weak components and replacing them with worthy ones. It turns out the system is kind of high maintenance and requires much studying, thoughtful consideration and hard work. So, thanks guys; it’s hard to imagine how we’d get it done without you.

Experience tells me not to start thinking too hard about real snow until Thanksgiving. I seem to have several memories of knocking down four inches of beautiful snow that morning. I’d love to do that again. So, I’m pinning my hopes there but will be content with whatever we get. We have so much to be thankful for.

Keep up with NSAA Operations team and Anchorage-area trail conditions at www.anchoragenordicski.com/trails.

the ALASKA nordic skier
Kachemak Nordic Ski Club
Homer, Alaska

AROUND THE BAY

KNSC Annual Meeting & Potluck Wrap-Up

The annual meeting/potluck was noisy, well-attended and fun, with lots of good food, really great auction items and desserts that will take many hours of hard skiing to work off. Alan Parks, dessert-auctioneer par excellence, was very persuasive in getting people to open up their wallets for chocolate-on-chocolate cookies and cakes – once again reinforcing the mantra: “We live to ski, and we ski to eat!” Despite my party and still haven’t re-upped your membership for the 2016/2017 ski season, you can download a membership form or join online at kachemaknordicskiclub.org.

Changes at the helm

The KNSC Board is what we understatedly call a “working board” – which is to say that everyone puts in a lot more time and effort than just attending monthly meetings, all for the low, low salary of zero. Such a deal.

So, when we thank the retiring board members for their service, and thank the new board members for stepping up to the plate, we really, really mean it. In this case, we ski to eat!” If you missed the party and still haven’t actually fit into that fab ski skirt that you got for Christmas the day before. Location TBA – check the KNSC website and Facebook.

Register now for KNSC Junior Nordic!

Junior Nordic is a great way to introduce kids to a fun, healthy sport that they will enjoy for a lifetime. We offer a non-competitive, learn-to-ski program for youth in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The emphasis is on fun on skis while working on balance, agility and the fundamentals of technique. Sessions begin Saturday, January 28, from 1:20 p.m. at Lookout Mountain and continue every Saturday through February 25. We hope to explore all trailsheads during the season.

The cost for the season is $25. Participants must be KNSC members and at least 5 years old. A limited number of rental skis and boots are also available at the low price of $25 for the season. Contact Carlin Rauch at knscjuniornordic@gmail.com for more detailed information.

Also – coaches and other volunteer helpers are needed! Come share your love of skiing with us!

Eveline State Recreation Site – A love story

BY MARYLOU BURTON

I didn’t know Edmund Schuster, nor did I know his wife Eveline, in whose memory Edmund donated the 80 acres that is now Eveline State Recreation Site. I only know Eveline (as most people call the area) as one of my favorite places to – depending on the season – walk, snowshoe and ski. But when Edmund died recently and I approached Dave Bram about doing an article about the park, I quickly realized that it was to be a love story – between Edmund and Eveline, and between them and this beautiful piece of land.

Among the background information that Dave gave me was a three-page, typed document that Edmund wrote in 2001 entitled “Background of the Homer Land Donation to the Alaska Division of Parks” Despite its austere title, the document is quite eloquent and moving. Edmund and Eveline grew up in Hirschegg, Austria, where Eveline’s family had a dairy farm. They first met – if you can call it that – when Edmund was “farmed out” at age 11 to help on the farm. Eveline was just a baby at the time, though, and when Edmund left home at age 17 she was still only in first grade. Their romance was still a long way off. Edmund went on to immigrate first to Canada at age 21, before eventually moving to Alaska in 1964, where he worked as a carpenter and firefighter while pursuing a college education. It was during that time that a fellow carpenter told him of a “beautiful piece of land high above Kachemak Bay out on the Homer East End Road.” His friend, who homesteaded the land, was in the market to sell, and after visiting it August “with the fireweed still in bloom all along the hillside,” Edmund knew "that was it – that it was fun to dance together.”

The Homem homestead, in the meantime, was still there. Edmund visited it almost every year, and when Eveline was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor and died the following year. “Our dreams of retirement together and more frequent visits to the homestead came to an end,” Edmund wrote. “Much of the joy to visit was now gone but her love for this land remained fresh with me.”

Edmund decided that he did not want the land to become another small-tract subdivision. After exploring various options, in 1999 he donated the 60 acres (later adding an adjacent 20 acres) to the Alaska Division of Parks for non-motorized recreational purposes. The donation was made in Eveline’s name “to preserve the memory of Eveline who valued the land and Alaska her new home.”

Seel LOVE STORY, Page 11
Photographic memories

The best of Alaska’s Nordic skiing adventures captured in the 2016 NSAA Photography Contest

Last winter, Matt Johnson captured a unique image of a unique skier at the 2016 High School T-Bird Classic at Kincaid Park. This fall, Johnson and his photo captured the attention of judges in the 2016 Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) Photography Contest, who named Johnson’s shot the Best of Show in the annual competition.

Johnson’s winning shot was among nearly 200 entries in this year’s edition of the annual competition. The top photos were showcased at the recent NSAA Annual Celebration in Anchorage.

For taking the top prize, Johnson earned a $50 gift card from Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking. Winners in each of the seven categories earned $35 gift cards from AMH; second-place entrants received $25 AMH gift cards; third-place entrants received $15 AMH gift cards. NSAA, the Anchorage Nordic ski community and contest photographers thank Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking for providing such generous prizes.

NSAA also thanks judges Will Dalton, Peter Luchsinger and Jovell Rennie for their time, as well as contest coordinator Amber Adams for her efforts behind the scenes, NSAA office staff Erin Beam and Tamra Kornfield for their assistance in proofing and editing, and Justin Ritter of CRW Engineering Group, LLC for his graphic design and technical assistance.

NSAA selected photographs from the contest for its 2016-17 calendar, which is on sale now around the Anchorage area and online. Calendars are $10 at the NSAA office, AMH, Skinny Raven, Kaladi Coffee shops and Alaska Mill and Feed. You can also purchase the calendar for $12 on the NSAA website at www.anchoragenordicski.com/merchandise or by emailing aadams@anchoragenordicski.com.

Here are complete results from the 2016 NSAA Photography Contest:

Grand Prize — Matt Johnson “2016 High School T-Bird Classic, Kincaid Park”
Racing — 1) Jack Consenstein; 2) Jack Consenstein; 3) Jack Consenstein
Touring/Backcountry — 1) Jack Consenstein; 2) David Evans; 3) Jack Consenstein
Kids on Skis — 1) Chris Flowers; 2) Elizabeth Knapp; 3) Jen Aist
Biathlon — 1) Bob Mumford; 2) Bob Mumford; 3) Bob Mumford
Fun Ski Events — 1) Matt Johnson; 2) Elizabeth Knapp; 3) Marti Pausback
Recreational/Casual Skiing — 1) Kathleen Metcalfe; 2) Jen Aist; 3) Mark McDermott

Touring & Backcountry, First Place – Jack Consenstein

Consenstein called this photo “Sunburst,” which pretty much nails it.
RECREATIONAL & CASUAL SKIING, THIRD PLACE – MARK MCDERMOTT
The snow is nice, the sun is bright, the hills are steep and the air is cool in this classic photo of Spencer Loop.

BIATHLON, SECOND PLACE – BOB MUMFORD
Mumford captured the fast and focused action of biathlon in one photo from the World Biathlon Championship Team Trials at Kincaid Park.

TOURING & BACKCOUNTRY, SECOND PLACE – DAVID EVANS
Mt. Besh provides the backdrop of this photo and the inspiration for a group of skiers touring in the Talkeetna Mountains.

RACING, THIRD PLACE – JACK CONSENSTEIN
Consenstein provided a bird’s eye view of a skiathlon traffic jam at Kincaid Park.

KIDS ON SKIS, FIRST PLACE – CHRIS FLOWERS
Flowers captured the calm before the backcountry storm as Cole and Cody Flowers prepare to drop in at Hatcher Pass.

BEST IN SHOW – MATT JOHNSON
This spooky and funny photo from the 2016 High School T-Bird Classic at Kincaid Park was the standout in the 2016 Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage Photography Contest. The photo also captured first prize in the Fun on Skis division.

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First snow, and first skiers, hit Hatcher Pass

Well once again winter shows its face first in Hatcher Pass, as far as skiing goes. Sure it wasn’t ‘epic,’ but it was good skiing and it was the first skies of the year. Then again, I have resorted to skiing on hoar frost on lakes by Jim Creek for my season’s first skies, so by that standard it was amazing. In typical fashion, our grooming staff was ready and may I say eager to get grooming and the skiing was good, for the amount of snow.

First season skies have always been the barometer of fitness for me, which is probably a flawed metric, given the variation in degree of difficulty between Anchorage Valley Road, Independence Mine and even Mud Lake. Nevertheless, I felt good this season compared to the last. That was until I came to the realization that last season’s start included a backpack named Bjorn (my son), that tipped the scales at 20-21 pounds and we were at Independence, rather than Anchorage. This season my back lacked any resemblance of a Yoda and the trails were fast.

So if or when you do get your skies out on the snow and that so happens to be in the Mat-Su Valley, consider contributing to the club and help keep the early season grooming happening every year.

By Hans Hill, MSSC President

Icicle Double: Ring in the New Year

With a few weeks left in this year, it is time to consider your New Year’s resolutions. Whether it is to drop a few LBs or to increase your aerobic threshold, the answer is the Icicle Double. If your resolution is more coaching time, the answer is a new resolution. As luck would have it, the race this year is on December 31 and January 1, a perfect fit to beginning one’s ambitious resolutions.

Exciting news for this year’s race is the addition of cash prizes for the top three men and women finishers for the combined two day results of the 30K distance race: $300 for first place; $200 for second place; $100 for third place.

Now tell me that isn’t an incentive! In addition to the cash prizes, all finishers of both 30Ks will receive the all-important Icicle Double beverage container (for your hoppy beverage, or whatever is your post-race recovery drink) and all entrants will receive a race T-shirt. There will be prize drawings and a potluck. Sign up at www.matsuski.org.

Mat-Su gets high-tech groomer

The Mat-Su Ski Club recently upgraded their grooming fleet with an enclosed cab, diesel powered Centaur with snow tracks, hydraulically operated plow and snow compaction bar, front and rear LED lights, winch and a cab heater.

The Centaur, made through Argo, was purchased through a State of Alaska Recreational Trails Grant and club funds. The ski club also purchased an additional 108-inch Ginzu groomer with two track setting pans and also upgraded their grooming trailer ramps to accommodate the heavyweight machine. The Centaur will be used to pack, groom and, when necessary, plow drifts at Independence Mine early in the ski season. Once snow arrives at Anchangel Rd and the Government Peak Rec Area, the machine will be used to efficiently, and quickly, groom these areas, especially when we get large dumps of snow.

All the volunteer groomers are excited to start using the machine to beat the snowflakes into submission. In the meantime they are discussing interior decorating options such as upholstery and carpet patterns, espresso machine hook up etc. They all agree on mounting a velvet Elvis on the ceiling.

Happy trails to all you skiers!

Race to the Outhouse a season-starting relief

BY JEFF KASE

The Mat-Su Ski Club’s grooming and a late-October snowstorm created a blanket of untouched corduroy and dozens of skiers just waiting for the Anchangel Road to open for skiing. On November 5, the Race to the Outhouse #1 was hosted by the Mat-Su Ski Club. It is believed to be the first ski race of the 2016/2017 winter in this country and the season’s first ski race on natural snow anywhere in North America.

The morning of race day was cold enough for me to want to wear long underwear. (In the official results, race director Ed Strabel described conditions as “18 degrees, light snowfall on packed powder.”) The trailhead parking lot was nearly full of Subarus and vans topped with Rocket Boxes. I recognized many faces, and there was no mistaking the sea of blue uniforms from the Alaska Pacific University ski team.

The 6-10 course is an out and back route on an old mining road that is wide enough for tracks on both sides and skaters to pass in between without inconvenience. There is a bit of an extended incline near the turnaround area that allows skiers to get their heart rates up, but most of the trail is fairly flat and good for gliding.

Scott Patterson and Maggie Meeds won the skate race. Ryan Brickford and Elizabeth Mars won the classic race.

Despite what the results show, I may have been the biggest winner of the day. I stood on the start line with World Cup contender Scott Patterson, who incorporated this race into his three-hour workout and afterwards wrote that he “felt like [the race was] a good way to shake out some faster muscles and lay down the law on some juniors and masters.”

When FasterSkier asked Maggie Meeds, 17, who attends South Anchorage High School and trains with APU, about her race, she responded, “It was really fun. I went out hard in the beginning, and I V2’ed basically the whole thing up to the top, and then the downhill was pretty easy; I just liked the whole way down. It was really fun.”

Meeds added that she had won running races before, but not a ski race, and that her big goals for the winter include winning a ski race in the Anchorage high school race season.

Racing continues in the Mat-Su Valley with the Icicle Double, a two-day ski race at Government Peak Recreation Area Dec. 31-Jan. 1. Cash prizes for the top three finishers in each gender from the two-day 30K race ($200 each) and the 10K skate, will be $300, $200, and $100 for first through third places. Shorter distances are also available.

— Quinn Kentsch contributed reporting

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Race to the Outhouse a season-starting relief
Volunteers always needed

We have one of the best membership and volunteer bases of any club. The amount of successes built by our volunteers is pretty inspiring. But as our club grows, so does its need for more volunteers. A good example of a volunteer opportunity is the high school races put on at GPRA. This season the club is putting on two high school races, the Government Peak Invite and the Region 1 Championship. With both these races encompassing a couple hundred racers, the volunteer needs are large, as well. Please take a moment to look at your calendar and consider volunteering for a day or two. The events are fun to watch and being a part of the event is even more rewarding.

Additionally, the MSSC hosts a myriad of events throughout the season and volunteers are always welcome. If you find you are looking for something to do any given weekend, check out our event calendar on our website, we may have a slot for you. Please email the club if you have interest in volunteering.

Upcoming events

December 10 — 7 p.m. Men’s GS, GPRA
December 31-January 1 — Icicle Double, GPRA
January 13-14 — Government Peak Invite High School Race

February 5 — Mat-Su Ski for Waman, GPRA

LOVE STORY

Continued from Page 7

Work began in earnest on the land in 2001 and the site was officially dedicated as the Eveline State Recreation Site in 2007. Throughout this process, KNSC has played, and continues to play, a significant role. By MOU with the Alaska Division of Parks, we are tasked with developing, maintaining and managing the trails for hiking and skiing. Much of this work has been done by the usual suspects – they don’t want to be named, but you know who they are. However, as new people move into the area and realize what a gem they have in their backyard, the coalition of volunteers continues to expand.

And the trails just keep getting better and better. The trails are regularly brushed and clipped to keep up with the fast-growing willow, and after several years we seem to be winning the battle. Last year groomers worked to widen some of the narrower trails, and a year or two ago a separated snowshoe route was added to the mix. Best of all, the Eveline trails are perfectly located to link into a much bigger world: To the groomed McNeil trails, to the Snowmad trails that go all the way to Caribou Lake, and – after the crust sets up in the spring – to as far as your energy and route-finding skills can take you.

I didn’t know Edmund or Eveline, but I share their love of the land that is now Eveline State Recreation Site. KNSC extends its condolences to the Schuster family and thanks them for their enduring gift of this beautiful area.

Skiing opportunities at the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup and beyond

BY LAURIS BASSETT
CROSS COUNTRY ALASKA

In January 2017, many Alaskan skiers will head to Soldier Hollow, Utah, for the USSA Senior National Championship. Skiers competing are looking for various opportunities which include making the U23 or World Juniors teams, the U18 Nations Cup team, and prequalifying for Team Alaska to attend Junior Nationals. The early January competition will give skiers who qualify an edge at the World Championships, which will also be held at Soldier Hollow at the end of January.

Generally, a venue which hosts Senior Nationals hosts the event two years in a row, but since Soldier Hollow is hosting two major events in one year a deal was struck with Anchorage to host the 2018 Senior Nationals Championships; so next season our skiers will have home-trail advantage.

Skiers who qualify for the U18 team get to travel to Trondheim, Norway, January 22-February 1 and compete in the Nationals Cup. Best of luck to all skiers heading out after the holidays!

During the years of Arctic Winter Games competition, participation of U14 athletes at the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup often increases. Skiers who have a goal to participate beyond the usual competition group makes for increased motivation to attend ski races. This season, top skiers of the U14 age group have the opportunity to compete at the Western Regional Championship ski races in Sun Valley, Idaho. These races will be held the last weekend in February.

Attending these races will give these young skiers a taste of the next level of competition; hopefully solidifying their motivation to continue cross country skiing. The top will be a lower-key version of the multiage group Junior Nationals trip which spans 10 days in early March. At the time of article submission, the full details for team selection have not been finalized but those skiers interested should check the Cross Country Alaska website: www.crosscountryalaska.org.

The USSA Junior Nationals Championships will be held March 3-11 in Lake Placid, New York. Top skiers of the U16, U18, and U20 ConocoPhillips Besh Cup races will represent Team Alaska in these annual races. In addition to reclaiming individual national championships, racers will compete as a team to earn back The Alaska Cup – which is the best cumulative score based on World Cup points earned at all of the races.

Alaska skiers will get another opportunity to compete at a high level in the spring when the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks will host the U.S. SuperTour Finals and Distance National Championships at Birch Hill from March 27-April 2.

Of course, all of this begins with Besh Cups 1 & 2 to be held at Kincaid Park on December 17-18. These USSA/FIS races will include a sprint race on Saturday and a mass start race on Sunday. Come out and support your local youth skiers as well as Alaska’s top elite skiers who will also be going on to compete at Senior Nationals and other national and international competition.

Pole length changes for classic skiing go into effect this season

Please visit the Cross Country Alaska website (crosscountryalaska.org) for specific information. All coaches have been provided details on how this change impacts skiers in Besh Cup races.

A firsthand view of the world’s best in Canada

BY FRITZ CREEK SKIER

To see the best skiers in the world competing against each other you usually need to travel to Europe. In Alaska, we are lucky to have some top athletes, especially the world champion Kikkan Randall, but we don’t get to see what they are up against in a World Cup race. The TV viewing experience does not compare to the live experience of watching the Norwegian champion Martin Sundby maintain his V2 pace to the crest of a long steep hill as all of the other racers are switching to V1.

The World Cup races do travel to North America every few years. In 2012, they came to Canmore, Alberta, and I went. Live at a race you can follow the progress of athletes of your choice instead of relying on the European coverage, where sometimes American athletes are never shown.

However, I was a little disappointed that the top European athletes – the A teams – were not all participating. Apparently, the risks carried by life on the road were not worth the rewards of winning a few Canadian races.

However, last season a new race series was created, SkiTour Canada, which would culminate the World Cup season with four races in Canmore. If an athlete wanted a shot at winning the overall trophies, they needed to race in North America. The A teams had to go, and therefore so did we!

My wife and I follow the World Cup races all season. We pick fantasy teams and our breakfast ritual on winter weekend mornings includes watching the latest races served-up at crosscountry.us. In the human brain, the neurons that would fire while performing an
Snowless in Eagle River? No problem – plan your upcoming adventures!

BY DENIS CORAL

So, for the past few weeks you’ve been waking up every morning in Eagle River and peeking out your window hoping to see a white blanket of snow … Shucks, no such luck! Each time, déjà vu of the last two winters has slowly crept into your mind and a feeling of foreboding takes over. I guess much like how you felt during the election campaign. In the past, scant snow and lots of dirt and ice had not been on the agenda for your Alaska winter fantasies and, hopefully, not this winter. But, what do you do if it’s a repeat? You access your memory bank of the last two years and discover that you actually did see some cool stuff outdoors. You’re thinking right now you can put on those Khahtoola hiking boot combos and climb to altitude with shiny studs (and put them to good use on the icy multi-use trails. Just remember to take them off before walking onto your cedar deck – they’re all fun, but let’s face it, what you’re really longing for is to click on a pair of skinny skis and get your spandexed hiney on the snow! Do you remember how you did that last two years? That’s right, the internet was your friend and you put in oodles of miles on the odometer to get your fix of Nordic nirvana. The Cross Country Alaska Trails Report, www.crosscountryalaska.org/trails, was your bible. Having faith in the website entries of like-minded skiers, you crossed your fingers and threw your ski gear into the back of the Subaru, and, headed out to white paradise. You recall that most of your skiing was at higher altitude. OK, so this year you may have to stay high. No, you’re not thinking the local cannabis dispensary to escape the reality of a snowless winter. You’re thinking elevation, where the snow doesn’t melt. You’re thinking Independence Mine, Archangel snow doesn’t melt. You’re thinking elevation, where the snow doesn’t melt.

Eagle River Jr. Nordic

Eagle River Jr. Nordic starts December 5 at 6:45 p.m. at the Beach Lake Trails Chalet. Check out the website for registration and Jr Nordic information: www.cernsc.org.

Eagle River’s Alaska Nordic Masters

Alaska Nordic Masters-Eagle River starts on December 6 with sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-8 p.m. Learn more at www.alaskanordicrocacing.org/master_eaglenews.html.

On February 26, Ski the Beach participants will race at Chugiak’s premier Beach Lake Trails, gather at the chalet and find additional parking lot at Chugiak High School. Learn more at cernsc.wildapricot.org/events.

Snowless in Eagle River? No problem – plan your upcoming adventures!

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Kicking off a new season of snow and fun in Talkeetna

The Denali Nordic Ski Club held its annual social and membership meeting November 11 at The Grove in Talkeetna. Cubbies Grocery Market and Denali Brewing Company sponsored the meeting.

Upcoming events currently include Ski Your Age on January 14 and the always fun Osiski Classic on March 18.

The Junior Nordic program is slated to begin in late January under the direction of Aubrey Smith.

The club will maintain trails this winter at the local elementary school (1K), Ski Hill (2.6K) and Fish Lake Recreation Area (5K). Borough Parks and Rec will maintain (12K) at Talkeetna Lakes Park. Su Valley High School also maintains (6K) on school grounds.

The next regular board meeting is set for December 7.

Learn more about DNSC at denalinnordicskiclub.org.

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AROUND DENALI

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SNOWLESS

Continued from Page 12

white fluffies finally settle in, we are blessed with several ski trails to pick from in the Chugach/Eagle River area. Check out the Eagle River Nordic Ski Club website, https://cernsc.wildapricot.org/Where-to-Ski-in-Eagle-River, for more detailed information on these trail systems. Here’s a quick rundown on what’s available in our area. The most extensive system is the Beach Lake Ski Trails with approximately 18 kilometers of mostly lighted trails suited for all skill levels. A welcoming chalet awaits as a warm-up facility where you can enjoy the company of your fellow skiers. The Mirror Lake Coyote Trails have about 5 kilometers of groomed, lighted trails for both classic and skate techniques. The Eagle River High School Trails are also lighted with a total of about 3 kilometers of groomers on both sides of Yosemite Drive. In addition, under the right conditions, the winter-closed road to the Eagle River campground could be groomed as well, giving more distance and challenge to your outing.

For those wanting a ski touring experience, you can satisfy your urge to meander at a multitude of places aside from your own backyard. Here’s a few suggestions among many: Eagle River Nature Center with its beautiful multi-use trails rich with wildlife year-round, Eagle River itself with multiple public accesses to the river (watch for open leads through the ice and snow), South Fork of Eagle River with its timberline atmosphere, Peters Creek Trail, Ptarmigan Trail accessed from the Old Glenn Highway to higher elevation, and always a favorite – Eklutna Lake. A strong suggestion – take an avalanche awareness class and equip yourself appropriately before venturing into the more extreme places.

So, there you have it. The truth is, Mother Nature calls the shots when it comes to what we do and when we do it in the outdoors. She’s finicky and we have to live with that and enjoy what she offers for the moment with what means we have. Snowless in Eagle River? No worries. No matter what winter brings down on us, venture outdoors to fend off that Seasonal Affective Disorder thing, stay smart, be safe, and most of all, have fun!
NSCF board tackles important skiing issues every month

BY ERIC TROYER

The business of the NSCF Board of Directors is critical to keeping NSCF programs running. Here are just some of the issues that the board, often with the help of volunteers, has currently been dealing with:

• Hiring a Distance Series coordinator for 2016-17. His name is Ross MacDougall. Ross is the Assistant Cross Country Running Coach at UAF. This is my second year on the board of the ski club, where I currently serve as vice president and on the nascent Trails Committee. I enjoy working to expand skiing opportunities for everyone in Fairbanks and ensuring that residents of the Interior continue having access to some of the greatest cross country skiing experiences in the country. In my non-NSCF life I am an attorney with the state. My wife, a Texas transplant, has learned to love winter and skiing and we look forward to teaching it to our two young daughters as they grow up.

Meet the Board introduces the Board of Directors of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks to NSCF members and the general public.
The Outreach Committee is part of the NSCF Strategic Plan for 2015-2020, shown here.

Liz Pawelko, 887-0379, lizpawelko@hotmail.com
Mike Donaldson, 388-6960, 479-6960, mike@scimatthisnite.org

Fairbanks Nordic Ski Patrol seeks volunteers to help at races

Meet the Board: Mark Winford

Winford wants to promote his addiction: Cross-country skiing

I grew up doing weekend skis with my family on the UAF trails. I did not become a serious skier until my kids joined the FXC program four years ago. I would ski when they skied. This led to my current skiing addiction. I mainly ski at Birch Hill, because my kids ski there. I live right on the old Skarland Trail just north of UAF, and my favorite ski is a late night headlamp ski from my house to the groomed UAF system. I do the 6-mile loop and then head back home, and I pretty much have the entire UAF trail system to myself late at night. I also participate in the local distance races. I am the chair of the Nordic Ski Club Fairbanks Outreach Committee. I volunteered to chair because I want to promote skiing in our community. I also want to serve on the board to continue and advance the great work of NSCF. Professionally, I am a public school administrator, so I bring a lot of experience with management and working with people. As a skier, I do not have a collegiate or elite skiing background; I am just someone who late in life has discovered the joy and benefit of skiing, and I want to promote this great activity at all levels. As a parent, I have a lot of experience with the FXC program, and I have really seen the benefits of this program for kids.
Max Donaldson of the Alaska Nanooks gives Jane Lanford some classic skiing tips at Ski Fest, held on November 12 at Birch Hill Recreation Area.

Ski Your Age in Kilometers encourages holiday skiing for another year

BY ERIC TROYER

Mark your calendars for Monday, December 26, to Ski Your Age in Kilometers in Fairbanks.

The 13th edition of this annual event will be held at Birch Hill Recreation Area, on the day after Christmas. It’s a good excuse to go cross-country skiing and burn off some of those calories stowed away the day before. The event runs officially from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. It has no entry fee, though donations are accepted and organizers ask that people bring potluck food.

Registration and food will be in the borough’s spacious Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center. The emphasis of the event is on fun, socializing and good exercise. Despite its name, people can ski whatever distance they please. Some uber-athletes will be out there hammering the trails, trying to crank out the most kilometers regardless of their age, while other participants will ski just a portion of their age before heading inside to eat and socialize. It’s all good!

Typically, kids as young as 1 or 2 join the fun along with those into their 70s or beyond. And since food and signups are all located in the Birch Hill Cross Country Center, all participants have a chance to socialize no matter their level of intensity or expertise.

If you would like to participate, please bring food to share. Popular items include soups, stews and chili in crockpots, since they are a great way to warm up after an invigorating ski. Sweets are also popular, especially with those crazy people going for the 100-kilometer challenge (skiing in kilometers the difference between their age and 100) and those geezer-jocks over 50 who ski their age or nearly die trying.

Don’t forget to register when you arrive. Accomplishments on many levels are recognized, including skiing a portion of your age (with bronze, silver, gold and platinum achievement levels), most kilometers skied (individual, family, mother-daughter, father-son), fewest kilometers skied, youngest and oldest participants, and many more.

While Ski Your Age in Kilometers has no entry fee, it is a fundraiser that benefits Fairbanks Cross-Country, the junior race program of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. A jar for donations will be available, as will forms for Friends of FXC, the program booster club. Membership forms for the NSCF will also be available.

Also, members of NSCF-FXC will be raising funds by gathering pledges for the amount of kilometers they ski. That’s another way to support the program. Hilary Saucy, NSCF-FXC assistant coach, is making some special NSCF hats to give as prizes to the people who raise the most amount of money at Ski Your Age.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact Collins Bonds at collinsbonds@hotmail.com or 371-5150.