ALASKANS ROCK!

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DINEEN PHOTOGRAPHY
Big start to 2018 provides momentum for remainder of the season

Message from NSAA’s Staff and Board of Directors

Winter is upon us and what an awesome January. We’re still coming down from the highs of the 2018 L.L. Bean U.S. Cross Country Ski National Championships at Kincaid Park. It was truly a community event and the buzz, the large and enthusiastic crowds, the volunteers and the athletes and coaches made NSAA, Anchorage and the Nordic community around the nation proud.

NSAA’s new sound system and timing upgrades at Kincaid Park made the larger success of the event possible, along with grants and donations from the Rasmuson Foundation and private donors, as well as many generous sponsors and countless amazing volunteers. The new technology upgrades helped more than 88,000 online viewers watch Nationals live, along with live timing/results, no matter where they lived. That elevated the event to a world-class level.

Soon after Nationals, NSAA was recognized by the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor Ethan Berkowitz for a job well done; many of us were present to accept the resolutions. The amount of people coming together for Nationals made this honor possible. NSAA thanks the Municipality and its staff — special shout-out to the team at Kincaid Park — for the support.

For those who attended Nationals, it was a perfect preview for the upcoming Olympics. Many Alaska athletes are in line to represent our state and country, making their dreams reality. Alaska’s Nordic community is proud of those skiers, as well as thankful for all who help and inspire in so many ways.

And our favorite — and busiest — stretch of the season is coming up: Ski for Women, Ski 4 Kids, Ski Train, high school/junior and community races, epic tours, and the list goes on ... There’s still a chance to compete, to volunteer, to celebrate and to be part of our special Nordic community.

(Around the Bowl)

Ski Train: Snow in Curry, tickets remain, fat bike raffle, cool swag and more!
As snow continues to accumulate in Curry, preparations for this year’s Ski Train are underway with volunteers and staff diligently working through the details with excited sponsors and partners like the Alaska Railroad. Plan to join the outdoor adventures and train/race/family fun on Ski Train leaving the station on Saturday, March 24.

Less than 100 tickets are left as of publication. If you haven’t gotten yours, this is a great getaway for the entire family! Kid pricing makes it affordable, family friendly cars make it fun! Plan to wear a superhero cape, to weather. Dedicated and tireless volunteers, as well as paid staff and coaches of all levels, continue to make Nordic skiing the popular sport it has been in Anchorage for all generations. Our annual membership towards trail maintenance and race organizing is one donation from which the family has greatly benefitted for a span of almost 50 years, including our children and grandchildren. We are proud to be supporting members of NSAA, and we thank you.

Sincerely,
Diane Crawford and family

Ready for exploration? Attend an upcoming NSAA backcountry tour
Find more information about NSAA tours at anchorageordiscki.com/tours.htm. All tours are accompanied by members of the Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol, who provide safety, trail sweep, and assist skiers with broken equipment or any other issues. If you have questions about tours or program or, contact one of the NSAA Touring leaders: Patti Phillips, Co-chair: NSAA contact, (907) 240-3742, philpppsj@chugach.net; Mary Vavrik, Co-chair: Nordic Ski Patrol contact, (907) 306-7668, mrvavrik@ic.gi; Karlene Leeper, Co-chair: Denali View Chalet, (907) 440-0049, kbleeper@alaska.net; and Ken DePalma, Co-chair: AT and Tele-ski tours, 947-440-1562, traveler@alaska.net.

UPCOMING TOURS INCLUDE:
February 9 — Friday Night Fun Ski, Upper O’Malley Trailhead; Tour leader — Ken DePalma.
February 11 — Portage Lake and Pass; Tour leader — Patti Phillips.
February 17-19 — Two overnights at Manitoba Huts – Tele and touring options; Tour leaders — Michael Hemich, Karlene Leeper and Mary Vavrik.
March 2 — Friday Night Fun Ski, Glen Alps; Tour leader — Ken DePalma.
March 2-4 — Denali View Chalet, two overnights, Peters Hills; Tour leader — Karlene Leeper.
March 10-18 — Denali National Park, fly-in and out of Kantishna, ski to mountain passes; see article in this month’s Nordic Skier for more information; Tour leader — Bob Sutherland.
March 18 — Skookum Glacier, Turnagain Arm, Kenai Peninsula; Tour leader — Patti Phillips.
March 30 — Friday Night Fun Ski, Prospect Heights Trailhead, Tour leader — Ken DePalma.

See AROUND THE BOWL, Page 3

the ALASKA nordic skier
Ski 4 Kids arrives February 24

Our community develops the next generation of champions and happy recreational skiers

BY CARLA BEAM

In early January, thousands of Anchorage residents watched their hometown heroes dominate at the 2018 L.L. Bean U.S. Cross Country Ski National Championships at Kincaid Park. On February 24, hundreds of Anchorage kids will come out to the 21st annual Ski 4 Kids to explore the same trails and tracks where the country’s best skiers challenged themselves and one another. Thanks to the work of many committed people in our community, one or more of those kids might one day compete in a national championship, a World Cup event, or even the Olympics. Many more will develop a lifelong love of cross-country skiing.

It’s through the partnership and cooperation of many organizations and people that Anchorage has grown to be a vibrant winter city with a flourishing community of skiers, and a powerhouse in the world of Nordic skiing. According to Margaret Timmerman, outreach skiing coordinator for Anchorage Parks and Recreation and Holly Hill, an Anchorage School District teacher. Their goal was to raise money to buy better and more ski equipment to use in the Municipality’s popular outreach program that gets kids onto skis through their local schools.

Over the years, Timmerman has seen partners step up to ensure that Ski 4 Kids and the Ski Outreach Program remain strong. Volunteer coaches from the community, NSAA Junior Nordic, the Anchorage School District, and the University of Alaska Anchorage have stepped in to help with the outreach to schools. Healthy Futures came forward to provide media support, race bibs, medals and buses for Title I schools to the Ski 4 Kids festival and the NSAA handles various administrative and fiscal responsibilities for the event. REI has been a donor and provides a location for bib pick-up. While Parks and Recreation continues to play an important leadership role, Timmerman acknowledges that these partnerships are critical.

AROUND THE BOWL

Continued from Page 2

FEBRUARY

Saturday-Sunday, February 3-4 — BASH Cup #5 and #6, Kincaid Park
Sunday, February 4 — Alaska Ski For Women, Kincaid Park
Wednesday, February 7 — ASD Middle School Race - Kincaid Park
Friday, February 9 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Friday Night Fun Ski
Friday-Saturday, February 9-10 — ASD High School - Region IV Championships - Kincaid Park
Sunday, February 11 — Ski Jumping Competition: All Hills
Sunday, February 11 — AMH Anchorage Cup - Sprint
Sunday, February 11 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Portage Lake and Pass

Wednesday, February 14 — ASD Middle School Race - Kincaid Park
Wednesday, February 14 — Battlein Race #5
Saturday, February 17 — ASD High School Classic Relay - East High
Saturday-Monday, February 17-19 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Two nights at Manitoba Huts - Tele/AT and Touring
Sunday, February 18 — AMH Anchorage Cup – Sven Johanson
Tuesday-Friday, February 21-24 — Ski Jumping & Nordic Combined Junior Nationals
Thursday-Saturday, February 22-24 — ASD High School - State Championships - Fairbanks
Saturday, February 24 — Ski 4 Kids, Kincaid Park
Sunday, February 25 — Ski the Beach: Memorial race Erica K. Johnson
Wednesday, February 28 — NSAA Backcountry Race - Kincaid Park
MARCH

Friday, March 2 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Friday Night Fun Ski
Friday-Monday, March 2-4 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Denali View Chalet two overnights
Friday-Monday, March 2-3 — Biathlet State Championships
Friday, March 2 — Tour of Anchorage Bib Pickup - APU
Saturday, March 3 — Tour of Anchorage Bib Pickup - APU
Sunday, March 4 — Tour of Anchorage
March 10-18 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Denali National Park, fly-in and out of Kantishna
Saturday, March 10 — Anchorage Junior Nordic Equipment Return - Buriker
Sunday, March 18 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Slocum Glacier
Monday, March 19 — Anchorage Junior Nordic Equipment Return - Buriker
Tuesday, March 20 — Anchorage Junior Nordic Equipment Return - Buriker
Saturday, March 24 — Ski Train
Saturday-Sunday, March 24-25 — SKAN 24 Race
Friday, March 30 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Friday Night Fun Ski

APRIL

Saturday, April 7 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Edds AT/tele, Turnagain Pass
For more events and details, visit the NSAA calendar at anchoragenordicski.com/calendar.

Community donors – businesses, individuals and foundations – are also important partners and help provide funds for the event and for the equipment grants administered by Ski 4 Kids.

LaToche Pediatrics is one donor that sees support of Ski 4 Kids as strongly connected to its business mission. According to LaToche’s Angi Titus, “We want to encourage kids of all ages to be happy and healthy; it’s what we are about.”

The doctors at another medical practice, Anchorage Pediatric Group (APG), not only support the event as donors, but as volunteers. Ed Alexander of APG says, “We have marveled at how many attendees and other supporters are always there, from Great Harvest Bread Co. to Kaladi Brothers Coffee to high school student volunteers. Ski 4 Kids promotes kids and families staying active and getting outside to enjoy this great state, even during the darkest and coldest parts of the year.”

Ski 4 Kids Coordinator Erin Whitney Witmer encourages businesses and individuals to consider giving back to the community and Alaska’s youth by supporting the Ski 4 Kids and its equipment grant program. Further, says Witmer, “We hope to see NSAA members, donors and community members come out to see, firsthand, the positive affect of this great event.”

This year’s Ski 4 Kids is noon-3:30 p.m. Saturday, February 24, at Kincaid Park. Register at anchoragenordicski.com/events/ski-4-kids/.

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On the cover – Clockwise from top: Tyler Kaminski sets out a victorious yak for crossing the Finish line to win the men’s 30K classic event; Caitlin Patterson swept all four women’s U.S. Nationals titles; Scott Patterson started the racing with a bang, winning the opening day’s men’s 15K freestyle event. Photos by Michael Dinneen Photography.
Another amazing Alaska Ski for Women kicks off on Sunday, February 4, at Kincaid Park. Skiers have the opportunity to participate in one of the following events: The Duathlon starts at 10:30 a.m.; the skate race also starts at 10:30 a.m. and the classic race begins at 11 a.m.

All participants are encouraged to participate in the costume parade at 11:45 a.m. Following the costume parade and contest, around 12:15 p.m., is the “party wave,” a 4K non-timed fun ski for all.

Prizes will be awarded to the top three skiers in each of the timed events, as well as to the best dressed team and individual. Online registration is open through midnight January 31 at www.anchoragenordicski.com/events/alaska-ski-for-women/. In-person registration and bib pick-up will take place from noon-7 p.m. Friday, February 2, at REI. For anyone who misses these deadlines, race-day registration takes place from 9-10 a.m. at Kincaid Park. Please note: those who register on race day can only register for the party wave.

As this race is also a fundraiser, participants are encouraged to donate a minimum of $35 for registration or $50 for registration and a SFW buff. The Alaska Ski for Women would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of the 2017 event: Platinum Sponsor ConocoPhillips; Gold Sponsors KTUU Channel 2; Silver Sponsors Anchorage Women’s Clinic, Banker Law Group, Denali OBGYN, Great Harvest Bread Co. and Premier Alaska Tours (which provides transportation); Bronze Sponsors REI and Bristol Bay Native Corporation. See everyone Sunday at Kincaid Park!

Learn everything you need to know about Ski for Women at anchoragenordicski.com/events/alaska-ski-for-women/.
Skier/Artist Rorabaugh makes 30th Tour a colorful celebration

The 2018 Tour of Anchorage arrives Sunday, March 4

BY MATIAS SAARI
Tour of Anchorage Race Director

Tasked with creating an art piece for the Tour of Anchorage, Becca Rorabaugh considered what is unique about the event that traverses town from the Hillside to the coast.

“The fact that you can race through tunnels is amazing,” said Rorabaugh, a longtime elite skier for the Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center.

So she decided to paint the silhouette of a racer skate-skiing through a tunnel near her apartment on the Chester Creek Trail. The process came with a significant challenge: she lacked an image for guidance.

“It was a fun exercise in perspective drawing,” said Rorabaugh, who started sketching the piece in West Yellowstone, Mont.

She created an outline while racing in SilverStar, British Columbia, and completed the purple watercolor in December while training in Fairbanks, her hometown. “It was a spatial awareness exercise since I didn’t have a photo.”

The Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage will use the art for this year’s Tour of Anchorage race posters, zipper pulls and merchandise.

Rorabaugh also donated the original painting for NSAA to auction at a fundraiser.

Rorabaugh has designed Besh Cup T-shirts in recent years and done art for Fairbanks’ Town Race Series since she was in fifth grade. In the last two years, however, she has taken her art to another level with acrylic paintings, watercolors and other mediums. Her colorful work is printed on neck warmers, stickers, greeting cards and even backpacks that she sells.

“It helps with ski expenses for sure. … I’m always surprised when people like it and buy the things that I make,” said Rorabaugh, who has competed in 10 European countries, won the 10-kilometer classic race at U.S. Nationals in 2014 and once placed 25th at a World Cup sprint in Quebec, Canada.

Visit www.beccarorabaugh.com and it’s clear by the caption “Alaskan Olympic Hopeful, Artist, Snow Addict and Architecture Student” that Rorabaugh balances many interests.

Though Rorabaugh won a bronze medal at January’s National Championships in Anchorage, she missed her goal of qualifying for the 2018 Winter Olympics. Instead she’ll stay in North America for races that include Wisconsin’s Birkebeiner, the country’s largest. She might even return for the Tour of Anchorage on March 4, an event the 28-year-old hasn’t contested since about seventh grade.

Each spring, Rorabaugh shifts her priorities by taking courses at Dartmouth College, where she’s a studio art major specializing in architecture.

“For me, I like to be pretty focused on one thing … school mostly or skiing mostly,” she said while sipping hot chocolate at a midtown Kaladi Brothers in late December. “But it’s healthy to have something else to look forward to, some art projects but not huge commitments.”

Melding her two passions is satisfying.

“Being able to do (art) now and ski (at the same time) is probably the thing I’m most proud of,” Rorabaugh said.

To register and learn more about the 2018 Tour of Anchorage, please visit anchoragenordicski.com/races/tour-of-anchorage.
Eagle River skiers, coaches and volunteers represent at U.S. Nationals

A whole crew of Eagle River skiers participated in the 2018 U.S. Cross Country Ski National Championships at Kincaid Park at the start of the year. Juniors included Max Beiergrohslein, Brian Wing, Torsten Renner, Konrad Tenner, Michael Earnhart, Michael Connelly, Roan Hall, Heidi Booher, Emma Nelson and Adrianna Profitt. The large Alaska contingent also included UAP skier Sissi Lammers and former UAP student Peter Brewer, as well as APU coach Lauren Fritz. Chugiak and Alaska Nordic Racing coaches Cody Priest, Stan and Gretchen Carrick, and Alex Loan supported local skiers. Bob Stehn helped with timing, while Mike and Alicia Beiergrohslein and Jim and Ros Singleton volunteered. Thanks to everyone for helping make the event a big success!

Where are they now: Hannah Rowland (Stevens)

So what I am up to after high school skiing in Eagle River? Currently I am waiting to get my one of wisdom teeth pulled, after 36 hours of traveling to get from Paris to Anchorage, Alaska. Well, I graduated from Eagle River Senior High School with the class of 2013, and I already had my college life planned. Earlier that year I had signed onto the UAP cross country running and ski team with a school support team. My intent was to redshirt in skiing my first year, but people got sick and they asked me to be the sixth Nordic ski team member. Bob Stehn supported local skiers. Bob Stehn helped with timing, while Mike and Alicia Beiergrohslein and Jim and Ros Singleton volunteered. Thanks to everyone for helping make the event a big success!

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Around the Valley

President's Corner: We are skiing on the new trails!

This past summer, the club built almost 7 kilometers of new trails that added to the existing 7.5K of trails at Government Peak Recreation Area. These trails were designed to attract skiers outside of the Mat-Su Valley for competitive events at GPRA and to provide more challenging trails for skiers in the Valley. Although we have yet to do the final smoothing and seeding of the trails, Ulfr, the Norse god of snow, has been kind to us by providing enough snow to groom the trails since mid-December.

Looking around Southcentral Alaska over the past few months, we see that Ulfr has not been so generous with his snow in other venues, which has brought many skiers from Anchorage and Eagle River to the Valley. The trails at Independence Mine that we groom, usually in mid-October, are the first to be groomed and this season that timing was spot on. As the snow works its way down the mountains in Hatcher Pass the next trail that we groom, usually in November, is Archangel Rd. If you are looking for skiable trails in the early season, you will have to arrive early, especially on weekends, since Anchorage skiers, clubs, and teams make full use of our trails. We are happy to host our Anchorage friends on our trails. They appreciate our grooming efforts and many buy trails pins and join our Club. Ulfr then decides that driving up to Hatcher Pass takes too long for most of us and sprinkles his magic powder on the trails at GPRA. The club's main effort switches to GPRA, but we still groom the other venues.

Due to the scant snow in other Southcentral locations, we have seen many skiers on our new trails from outside the Valley. Anchorage skiers found the trails early on, and the Olympic trials in Anchorage in early January brought many national and international competitive skiers to the new trails. We have had superlative reports from them, with one of them saying it is one of the Top 10 Nordic trails in the world. Hyperbole aside, we are grateful for their praise.

I would like to thank our incredible volunteers that made these trails possible: Lucas Parker, Ed Strabel, Mark Strabel (who put in over 500 volunteer hours), and our club members who showed up throughout the summer. With a price tag of over $225,000, we had many donors and sponsors, including the Mat-Su Borough, the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation, Mountain Streams Bed and Breakfast, MEA, and many others that you can find on our new website (thank you, Chris Gierymski!) at matuski.org. Let's go ski, Dave Musgrave

MSSC Ski for Women – Sunday, February 4

Save the date for Super Bowl Sunday! Have a lot of munching and watching TV planned for the afternoon? Work out those calories in advance at the fifth annual Mat-Su Ski for Women! This fun, un-timed event begins at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 4. Costumes are encouraged and all entry fees go to Alaska Family Services. The famous golden ski pole is awarded to the skier with the best costume. Registration is now open at https://matsusukiclub.wildapricot.org/event-2779677/Registration(bit.ly/2r1lkd3). Long-sleeve shirts and hooded sweatshirts will be available for purchase in-person and online during registration. Stay tuned to Mat-Su Ski Club's Ski for Women Facebook page for more information.

Calendar

Sunday, February 4 — Ski for Women - GPRA 11 a.m.
Tuesday, February 6 — MSSC Club Board Meeting - Location TBA 6:30 p.m.
Alaska athletes, volunteers, trails and supporters put on world-class performances as U.S. Nationals hosts


Skiers with Alaska roots swept all eight of the week’s national championships titles.

Kincaid Park offered a spectator-friendly, athlete-challenging venue while Alaska’s weather provided a just-in-time dump of snow, plenty of sunny bluebird skies, a few patches of dramatic ice fog and awesome displays of alpenglow.

Many Alaska businesses, as well as the Municipality of Anchorage, gave outstanding partnership and sponsorship support to fuel the event. And dozens of Alaska’s amazing coaches, hundreds of tireless volunteers and the super staff of the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage were welcoming hosts – from trail grooming to the event’s technical aspects, organization to hospitality and helping visitors enjoy the Anchorage experience, every aspect of Nationals was above and beyond. An Alaska-sized thank you to everyone who played a role in that success!

Hundreds of spectators attended each of the four days.
of racing while tens of thousands watched the online livestream of racing. There was local, statewide and national media coverage, as well as loads of online and social media buzz. The biggest buzz was created by Caitlin Patterson, who skied for South Anchorage High School before moving to Vermont for college and eventually settling there. She returned to Kincaid and swept all four women’s U.S. National titles – the 10K freestyle, the freestyle sprint, the 20K classic and the classic sprint. (Patterson won three of the four races, placing second in the 20K mass start classic race to University of Colorado’s Hedda Baangman of Sweden, who was ineligible to win a U.S. title.

“It’s hard to put into words,” said Patterson, who now skis for Craftsbury Green Project Racing, left Anchorage a six-time National champion. “Amazing. Beyond what I could have imagined.”

Reese Hanneman, originally of Fairbanks and now of Anchorage who races with APU, swept both 2018 Nationals sprint events, the most dramatic with his men’s classic sprint win as he edged APU teammate Tyler Kornfield by .2 seconds to earn his fourth Nationals sprint title – two freestyle, two classic.

Anchorage’s Kornfield had his own day at the top of the podium, winning the men’s 30K classic. Anchorage’s Scott Patterson, younger sibling of Caitlin, took the opening day win in the men’s 15K freestyle.

Read full stories of each event, check out photos and videos, and learn more about the Nationals event and its competing athletes at usnationals2018.com, facebook.com/xcusnats2018 and instagram.com/usnats18/. Find full race results at superiortiming.com.
New technology gives great views of KNSC trails

For years, to find out the latest conditions of Homer's ski trails, you drove to a trail head and took your chances. Current KNSC president Mike Gracz even started a "Fritz Creek Skier" Facebook page a few years ago where skiers could write comments about where they had just skied.

Now, with automated trail cameras at the Lookout and McNeil trail heads and an online "grooming report" system on which groomers post the latest grooming results, anyone can get the latest pictures and news of conditions on Homer's ski trails.

"I had skied at other Nordic centers and used these services there," says Gracz. "And I knew of the desire of the KNSC membership for better reporting on trail conditions." KNSC funded the new technology — surprisingly inexpensive — with membership dues. Gracz researched the cameras online and had already used Skitrails.info at other Nordic centers.

He chose a service that covered North America in hopes to draw some cross-country ski tourism to Homer. He chose a service that covered North America in hopes to draw some cross-country ski tourism to Homer. The service is worth it. Skitrails.info is easy to integrate trail data with the KNSC Nordic Ski Club for updates and more information.

Happy,” Gracz adds. “And local skiers are happy, too. To use these two new technologies, go to kachemaknordicskiclub.org and click on the "Trail Conditions" button on the homepage.

Kachemak Women's Nordic — Kachemak Women’s Nordic is intended for those skiers looking to improve their technique and establish a regular training program. Enrollment is encouraged but not required. The group focuses on skiing and classical techniques. Practice is held three to six times a week. Participants must be KNSC members.

Kachemak Women’s Nordic Training dates — Mon, Wed., Thurs., Fri. from noon-1:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. noon. For details, visit: kachemakwomensnordic.com.

Co-Ed Intermediate Skate Technique and Tour Preparation Awareness — A new program, sponsored by Kachemak Women’s Nordic, to train co-ed intermediate skiers to improve their skate techniques and fitness levels. Five-week course with 10 sessions, running from January 27 through February 28, on Wednesdays, noon-2 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. noon. Locations depend on snow conditions. Cost: $50. To participate, phone coordinator Jasmine Maurer at (907) 299-6975.

January 27-February 24, Saturdays — Junior Nordic Program - This learn-to-skis program for youth from kindergarten through sixth grade offers five Saturdays of winter fun. The program takes the youth to the different trail heads. Rental equipment is available. First session: Saturday, January 27, at Lookout Mountain Recreation Area, 1-2:30 p.m. Other locations TBA.

PSIA Coaching Clinics — Wednesdays afternoons. Contact Megan Coraza at (907) 299-0687.

February

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

Sunday, February 4 — Skit/Walk Run for Women - Lookout Mountain State Recreation Area

Sunday, February 11 — Wine and Cheese and Wooden Ski Tour - Noon-4 p.m. at location TBA.

Backcountry Film Festival — 7 p.m. at Homer Theatre. Dates and details TBA.

March

Saturday, March 10 — KNSC Nordic Ski Marathon - Lookout Mountain Ski Trails (starting line) Check the website and Facebook at Kachemak Nordic Ski Club for updates and more information.

Sea to Ski — TBA, based on snow. For more details, check out the KNSC website or Facebook page closer to March.

The cameras are powered by electric meter and switches. Gracz installed the cameras and started got the system on line. Additional support included technical support from Spartan Cameras and KNSC board member Richard Burton to write code so that the hourly photos are removed after a few days. The real-time grooming report system cost a bit more. But with the constantly changing weather Homer trails have, the up-to-date grooming system is worth it. Skitrails.info provided the instructions, and the costs ran $900 for the equipment and around $600 a year for the service. Bruce Hess of Puffin Electric volunteered his time to wire the new system, which includes a power outlet, a rear-facing light, a voltage meter and switches. Gracz had previously mapped the ski trails in Homer, which made it easy to integrate trail data with the Skitrails.info system. Skitrails.info uses a widely available wiki-type of application, OpenStreetMap, which was useful in integrating the trail system information. Groomers can add comments about trail conditions as they groom, but all they really need to do is turn on the tracker mechanism and groom. Skitrails.info does the rest.

“We wanted something that was close to zero maintenance, and we are happy,” Gracz adds. And local skiers are happy, too. To use these two new technologies, go to kachemaknordicskiclub.org and click on the “Trail Conditions” button on the homepage.
Big numbers – in years, Ks and skiers – make KNSC Ski Your Age a hit

Under clear skies and a smooth track, a record number of Homer-area skiers took to the trails for the Ski Your Age event, annually held on December 26.

“We had an outstanding Ski Your Age event up at the Lookout Mountain ski trails,” said Janna Davis, who organized the event with her husband and two kids. “This may have been our largest attended event yet with 80 participants signed up and definitely a few that came out and skied but didn’t enter a category.”

The groomers contributed to a glorious day by having the trails ready by the 9 a.m. starting time. “Corduroy [tracks] was available for those that got an early start on their skiing,” added Davis.

Taro Sasakura skied the most kilometers – 65 – and Annie Ridgely was one kilometer behind with 64. High school ski team members and past ski team members were out in force, with two current ski team members, Jacob Davis and Caleb Rauh, skiing 42 kilometers each.

“There were a large number of families out to enjoy the sunny day,” Davis added. “Thirteen families participated in the challenge. The Schmidt family dominated the family challenge by skiing a combined 146 kilometers.”

The money donated at the event supports the high school ski team (the Mariners) as members head into two months of ski racing this spring.

“The Homer High Mariners want to thank all who came out and enjoyed skiing with them as they work to stay in shape over the Christmas break,” Davis said.

Ski Your Age or more — Katie Davis, 19 K; Jacob Davis, 42 K; Annie Ridgely, 64 K; Fred Dickerson, 41 K; Caleb Rauh, 42 K; Zoe Storson, 15 K; Matt Haakenson, 37 K; Fischer Corazza Spurkland, 12 K; Katie Schmidt, 31.5 K; Emily Schmidt, 33.75 K; Marie Schmidt, 31 K; Johannes Bynagle, 10 K; Etta Bynagle, 7 K; Lake Alexson, 12 K; Wylde Johnson, 10 K; Sawyer Johnson, 5 K; Clara Booz, 10 K; Tara Sasakura, 65 K; Aspen Daigle, 20 K; Autumn Daigle, 18 K; Iris O’Laire, 15 K.

Family Ski Meister totals — Schmidt Family, 140 K; Alexson Family, 104 K; Dickerson Family, 103 K; Morelli Family, 89 K; DeStef Family, 77 K; Rauch Family, 66 K; O’Laire Family, 60 K; Haakenson Family, 41.5 K; Corazza Family, 36 K; Pointe-Devin Family, 31 K; Bynagle Family, 28 K; Graczy/Stenger Family, 26.4 K; Masten Family, 25 K; Andy Super, 17 K; Kate Miller, 27 K; Clyde Osmena, 13 K.

Century Club (ski 100 minus your age in K) — Annie Ridgley, 64 K; Ruth Dickerson, 35 K; Cindy Sisson, 41 K; Marylou Burton, 30 K; Richard Burton, 26 K.

Sundowner (ski 50 K; between sunrise and sunset) — Annie Ridgley, 64 K; Tara Sasakura, 65 K.

Other skiers who skied someone else’s age in kilometers — Tana Schmidt, 40 K; Angelica Haakenson, 4.5 K; Ruth Dickerson, 35 K; Cindy Sisson, 41 K; Marylou Burton, 30 K; Richard Burton, 26 K; Janna Davis, 16 K; Yvonne Leutwyler, 8 K; Anna Dickerson Williams, 17 K; Elizabeth Dickerson Williams, 10 K; Claire Neaton, 21 K; Emma Laukis, 21 K; Hannah Storson, 7 K; Catie Bursch, 13.5 K; Megan Corona, 12 K; Rich Corona, 6 K; Sonja Corona, 6 K; Carrie Rauh, 24 K; Tim Schmidt, 10 K; Derek Bynagle, 11 K; Mia Alexson, 16 K; Quinn Alward, 16 K; Marie Alexson – 20 K; Pete Alexson, 40 K; Jen Booz, 10 K; Kaja Morelli, 17 K; Cynthia Morelli, 7 K; Libby Falish, 8 K; Josh Vantresse, 14 K; Maddie O’Laire, 20 K; Michael O’Laire, 40 K; Carolin O’Laare, 5 K; Alison O’Hara, 13 K; Alan Parks, 13 K; Mike Gracz, 11.4 K; Michele Stenglin, 15 K; Nicky Scarza, 10 K; Unknown – Jane Witter; Stan Purington; Kim Sweeney; Karen Northrup; Tanner Reid; Frida Renner; Lukas Renner; Heather Renner; Molly Marden; Renee Marden; Katie Marden; Brad Marden; Bob Ostrum; Tal Ostrum; Abby Ostrum; Elena Badjaja; Jai Badjaja; Charlie Towbridge; Rebecca Towbridge.

Karl Eid Ski Jumps and Kincaid Park to host 2018 Nordic Combined Junior Nationals

Nation’s top Nordic ski jumping and combined athletes compete February 21-24

The nation’s best young ski jumpers are coming to Anchorage to compete in the 2018 Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined Junior Nationals, February 21-24. Approximately 70 of the country’s top ski jumpers and Nordic combiners will bring years of dedication and training to the 65-meter ski jump tower and to Kincaid Park’s cross-country trails as they strive to fulfill their dreams. This group of athletes will include at least four young Alaskans!

The event kicks off with official training 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 21. The Individual Jumping Competition is noon-2:30 p.m. Thursday, February 22; the Individual 5K Nordic Combined cross-country ski race will be held at Kincaid Park at 4:30 p.m. Team Jumping will start at noon Friday, February 23, followed by the Team Nordic Combined 1.4k x 2 relay at 4:30 p.m.

The event wraps up with the always exciting Elimination Jumping Competition on Saturday, February 24. This distance-only competition has jumpers going for broke in a head-to-head bracket format until there is a winner. The entire schedule is online at www.anchoragenordicski.com/jumpjr-nationals/.

Become part of an event that demonstrates the best of human character, the goal to excel, and the spirit of competition. We can always use volunteers and spectators! If you’d like to get involved, contact Karen Compton at kcompton@gci.net. Hope to see you at the hills!
Young skiers just strides away from representing AK on national/world stages

BY CCAK

Alaskan skiers and biathletes recently competed in national races that give them opportunities to pre-qualify for positions on their respective Team Alaskas at upcoming Junior National-als competition to be held in Soldier Hollow, Utah, in March. According to U.S. Ski and Snowboard rules, skiers who finish in the top 20 of the U.S. National Championships World Junior points list prequalify for their regional teams. Additionally, biathletes who earn positions on the U.S. World Junior Biathlon team automatically prequalify for their regional teams. This season, 15 skiers prequalified for Team Alaska, the largest field of prequalifiers since 2010-2011.

In early January, the 2018 L.L.Bean U.S. National Cross Country Ski Championships were held in Anchorage with over 300 skiers descending upon Kincaid Park from around the nation. Alaska skiers took advantage of the home trail advantage and claimed the top of the podium in all eight championship races. For Team Alaska, theoretically, it could mean that instead of the base team size of 42, Team Alaska could bring 57 athletes to Utah. The base size of 42 is comprised of 13 U18/U20 and eight U16 skiers of each gender. Actually bringing 57 skiers, however, is unlikely; as the World Championships for the biathletes (Grace Gilliland & Helen Wilson) coincide with Junior Nationals. Additionally, the prequalified collegiate athletes (UAA skiers Hailey Swirbul, Hannah Rudd and Jenna DiFolco, and UAF skier Anna Darnell) could be skiing in the NCAA Championships in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, which coincides with Junior Nationals. Bringing additional skiers to Junior Nationals gives a team more opportunities to garner points toward The Alaska Cup. At national (and international) events, skiers who place within the top 30 of a race are awarded World Cup points based on their results. The Alaska Cup is awarded to the regional team with the most cumulative World Cup points at the end of the series. This award has eluded Team Alaska for the past few seasons; nine additional skiers will give Team Alaska an increased chance to bring The Alaska Cup home. Best of luck to all skiers!

Additionally, 8 of the 12 World Junior team skiers call Alaska home. Hannah Rudd, Hailey Swirbul, Molly Gellert*, Gus Schumacher*, Hannah Halvorsen, Hunter Wonders, Canyon Tobin and Luke Jager* qualified to attend the World Junior Championships in Switzerland. Four of the 12 skiers named to the U18 Nations’ Cup team hail from Alaska. Ti Donaldson, Kendall Kramer*, Annika Hanestad and Zanden McMullen qualified to at-tend the U18 Nations’ Cup in Finland. (“These athletes qualified for both the World Junior Championships team and the U18 Nations’ Cup team.) The U23 World Ski Championships are held in Switzerland along with the World Junior Championships and top Alaskan skiers Thomas O’Harra and Lydia Blanchet will represent the U.S. in this age group.

This is a lot of action before the second weekend of the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup race series! There are 38 positions still available on Team Alaska for Junior Nationals. Alaska allows skiers who place 21-30 in the U.S. National Championships World Junior points list to “auto-qualify” for a position on Team Alaska. While those who auto-qualify take up allocated quota spots, this gives them flexibility in regard to competing in the last two weekends of Besh Cup races.

CCAK skiers also have Arctic Winter Games to look forward to. This event is open to skiers in the U14, U16 and U18 age groups and is a unique event with great international flavor giving Alaska skiers the opportunities to meet skiers from the Arctic regions of Sweden, Canada, Greenland and Russia. The Arctic Winter Games are considered the “Olympics of the Arc-tic” as the competitions also include hockey, downhill skiing, snowshoeing; as well as indoor sports enjoyed by Arctic communities such as basketball, futsal, volleyball, and even ping pong! The 2018 Arctic Winter Games will be held in Fort Smith and Hay River of the Great Slave Region of The Northwest Territories.

Follow Alaska’s skiers and news at crosscountryalaska.org.
Three Alaskans named to the 2018 Youth/Junior Worlds Biathlon Championships

For a second year in a row, youth biathletes from Alaska dominated the Youth/Junior World Championship Trials. Because of that success, Maximine Germaine, 16 of Anchorage, Grace Gilliland, 18 of Chugiak, and Helen Wilson, 16 of Eagle River, all qualified to attend the Youth/Jr World Championships in Otepaa, Estonia, in February.

This is the first trip to the Championships for Germaine. Gilliland and Wilson earned spots on Team USA at last season’s Championships in Osrblie, Slovakia. Germaine and Gilliland race for Alaska Pacific University and Anchorage Biathlon Club; Germaine skis for West High School in Anchorage and Gilliland skis for South Anchorage High School. Wilson races for Eagle River High School, Alaska Nordic Racing and Anchorage Biathlon Club. All three athletes are coached by Marine Dusser, formerly of the French National Biathlon team, and assistant coach Marion Botessi, also of France.

This year, the trials were held in Coleraine, Minnesota, and with challenging temperatures as the upper Midwest plunged into a deep freeze. Due to extreme cold only two of the three trial races were conducted. More than 50 athletes from across the country competed; 12 Alaskans traveled to Minnesota for the trials, representing Nome, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Eagle River and Chugiak.

NSCF Member Spotlight: Mike Hajdukovich,
(Official) Birch Hill Cross-Country Skiing Ambassador

My name is Mike Hajdukovich and our family has been members of NSCF for over 10 years. We have been cross-country skiing for over 40 years and my first memory of cross-country skiing was when my mom would try to get us all excited about following her on the trails and all us kids absolutely hated it. We downhill skied every weekend so XC skiing was way too much work and not enough speed. Mom is always right though. My brother got me hooked with a Birch Hill 30 degree ski and my wife got me hooked on classic after buying me a fancy pair of classic skis for Christmas. The rest is history.

Now our family knows that there are two ways to get excited for winter: classic skiing in the cold and skate skiing when it's warm. I still tell these stories to first-time folks when they come into our store, Trax Outdoor Center in Fairbanks and soon Anchorage. My favorite place to ski is definitely Birch Hill AK. The groom, the variety of trails, the levels of difficulty, the chance of bumping into a friend, how close it is to our home, and the nighttime lighting that makes it look like Narnia are all the reasons why that’s home for me. I love Fairbanks. That's where I was born and raised and it's where I've had lots of great times with lots and lots of friends and family. Our family has deep roots in this area that go back to Gold Rush days so I just feel really comfortable living in the interior.

I enjoy many other sports and activities other than XC skiing, as well. Alpine skiing, basketball – which was my main sport for about 35 years – slalom waterskiing, wake surfing, paddleboarding, yoga, running and biking are some of the activities that keep me and my family active when we aren't XC skiing. A cool new factoid about me is that I just got certified with 200 hours of yoga teacher training! Coaches always stressed to me how important it would be to add yoga into my life to enhance flexibility, strength and my mindset into my game. Well, that really hits home the older you get and you want to still do all these activities at the levels you’re used to without getting injured!

AROUND THE INTERIOR

Contribute to the Trail Fund

Have you noticed that Birch Hill's trails are not being groomed as often? Donations are not keeping pace with expenses. The club has had to cut expenses, which means less grooming. If you want more grooming, please donate, and encourage others to do so, too. Please visit the club’s website (nscfairbanks.org) to donate. Click on Support NSCF > Birch Hill Trail Fund; recommended donation amounts will be listed there.

This annual cost includes: labor, fuel, equipment maintenance and replacement. Grooming is paid for entirely by donations through NSCF and NOT the borough.

Fairbanks hosts ASAA State Cross-Country Championships Feb. 22-24

Alaska's top high school athletes will converge on Fairbanks for the ASAA State High School Cross-Country ski championship races February 22-24 at Birch Hill. The weekend will include events for boys and girls. The competition will start off with free technique interval race followed by classic technique with mass start and conclude with fun and exciting mixed technique relay races. Bring your cheering squad and cowbell to show your support for our Fairbanks athletes!

Sonot Kkaazoot registration available

The NSCF is proud to announce that registration for the 21st annual Sonot Kkaazoot is now available. Fairbanks’ annual spring skiing marathon will take place Saturday March 24, and will have 50K, 40K and 20K options. The early registration deadline is 5 p.m. February 23. For more information, visit sonotkkaazoot.org.

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 and share PDF versions at anchorangordinicski.com/newsletters.htm. Getting the newsletter only online saves our club money, too!

NSCF Calendar keeps you updated

Remember to check the NSCF Calendar for upcoming club events like races, social activities and more. Visit nscfairbanks.org for more! You can also “like” the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks on Facebook to keep up with local events.

NSCF seeking Junior Nordics coaches

Our youth skiers are in need of your help! We have lots of excited, budding Nordic skiers ready to enjoy this amazing snow and not enough volunteers to keep them on the trails. See AROUND THE INTERIOR, Page 15
NSCF & Goldstream Sports host a beautiful night At Birch Hill

BY KATE CAREY

The seemingly constant Fairbanks darkness took a calming, peaceful and beautiful turn at the Birch Hill Cross Country trails just after nightfall (4 p.m.) on January 4. Taking advantage of a generous donation from Goldstream Sports and the efforts of NSCF volunteers, over 700 individually handcrafted ice hurricane/lanterns and votive candles lit up the warm-up loop and stadium inviting those both new and those experienced to the incredible Fairbanks trails.

Helena Reuter, NSCF board member, even created a YouTube video for volunteers to guide them through the ice lantern making process so the trail lights could be turned off. Both sides of the warm-up loop and the stadium were lined with glowing lanterns, including a pathway winding through the stadium.

Approximately 500 skiers – adults and children – joined the candlelight parade. Many new skiers dropped by after work with friends while others brought their entire families to participate in the event. The first 80 children received a small gift and inside the ski center happy families gathered to warm up and share coffee and hot chocolate doled out by happy kitchen helpers and munched on yummy cookies provided by Subway. The Goldstream Sports FINISH arch helped make the stadium festive.

Fairbanksan Somer Hahm brought her family to enjoy the evening and said, “I loved the Candlelight Ski. We are big into Nordic skiing, and it was a fun family centered event. Enjoyed that it got us out at night to Birch Hill. It was so easy to follow the lights around the warm-up loop. My daughter loved it! The candles added such a beautiful atmosphere, it was a joyous occasion to gather with the community. I will highly recommend it to all my friends next year. What a treat!”

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 is available at Junior Nordics, FNSB elementary schools and online – but you can start recording your Ks now! Awards for all finishers and each grade level and a “midway” prize once you get to 25K! Those that complete the challenge will be entered into a drawing for fun ski gear to be awarded in March. For more information contact Kate Carey at katecarey907@gmail.com.
Perfect 10: Team USA roster packed with Alaskans

Randall, Bjornsen siblings lead Alaska skiers into 2018 Olympic Winter Games

When U.S. Ski & Snowboard recently announced its 20-person cross-country ski team to represent the nation in the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, it also selected a team that would represent Alaska.

In one of the most exciting milestones in Alaska Nordic skiing’s already storied history, half of the skiers named to the 2018 U.S. Olympic Cross-Country Skiing Team were Alaskans and Alaska-based athletes.

Some learned to ski in Alaska, going as far back as Jr. Nordic programs with the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage and the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. Others took the leap from Anchorage and the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks.

The group is led by four-time Olympian and three-time World Championship medalist Kikkan Randall, who has been Alaska’s, and America’s, skiing sweetheart for more than 20 years. She’s joined by two-time Olympians, and siblings, Sadie and Erik Bjornsen. The rest of the group with Alaska roots are first-time Olympians – siblings Reese and Logan Hanneman; siblings Caitlin and Scott Patterson; Tyler Kornfield, Rosie Brennan and Rosie Frankowski.

Shortly after the announcement, longtime Alaska skiing star Holly Brooks, who raced in the 2010 and 2014 Winter Olympics, summed up the magical moment in a column for the Anchorage Daily News, writing, “Thanks to the vision of our strong Nordic skiing leadership and the strength and depth of our community, a state with a tiny population will be represented in a huge way at the Winter Olympics.”

Alaska Governor Bill Walker tweeted, “What a team! Congratulations to all!” while

Nine of the 10 skiers train and race for the Anchorage-based APU Nordic Ski Team. Another APU skier who grew up in Alaska, Jessica Yeaton, will ski for Australia in the Olympics.

“I am extremely proud of our team – we committed to a big goal and worked really hard to get here,” said Erik Flora, APU program head coach, in a press release. “We are thankful for the support of our Alaskan community and will be proud to represent our country at the Olympic Games.”

The U.S. has only one cross-country skiing medal in its Winter Olympics history – Bill Koch’s silver in 1976. This group, with its recent run individual and team success on the World Cup circuit, is primed to change that.

“These USA Olympians have prepared extremely well for PyeongChang and are looking to rewrite U.S. cross-country skiing history,” Chris Grover, Team USA head coach, said in a press release. “The U.S. Ski Team is headed to PyeongChang with one of the most talented and decorated Olympic teams of all time. Never in our history have we fielded a team with so many podium-proven World Cup and World Championship athletes. We also have incredible momentum in this Olympic season with 10 World Cup podiums secured by early January.”

The U.S. roster also includes stars like Sophie Caldwell, Jessie Diggins, Anne Hart, Kaitlynn Miller, Ida Sageng and Liz Stephen on the women’s team; and Patrick Caldwell, Simi Hamilton, Noah Hoffman and Andy Newell on the men’s side.

In PyeongChang, the 5-year-old Siblings, and first-time Olympians, Scott and Caillin Patterson are originally from Idaho, but spent their high school years skiing in Anchorage. Both went on to college in Vermont – Caitlin still lives there while Scott returned to Anchorage.

2014 Olympians Erik Bjornsen and Sadie Bjornsen are originally from Washington, but have trained and competed in Anchorage for many years, as has Olympic newcomer Brennan (originally from Park City, Utah).

And Yeaton, who will ski for Australia, moved to Anchorage from Perth when she was 12 and has lived there since.

Learn more about Team USA and follow the Alaska based skiers at usskisnowboard.org/teams/cross-country, facebook.com/usssnowboard and teamusa.org.

2018 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING EVENTS

(at all times below are Alaska Standard Time)

- **Friday, February 9 —** Women’s Skithon, 11:15 p.m.
- **Saturday, February 10 —** Men’s Skithon, 10:15 p.m.
- **Tuesday, February 13 —** Men’s and Women’s Classic Sprint, qualification at 12:30 a.m., heats at 3 a.m.
- **Wednesday, February 14 —** Women’s 10K Freestyle, 10:30 p.m.
- **Thursday, February 15 —** Men’s 15K Freestyle, 10:15 p.m.
- **Saturday, February 17 —** Men’s 4x10K Relay, 10:15 p.m.
- **Saturday, February 17 —** Women’s 4x5K Relay, 2 a.m.
- **Wednesday, February 21 —** Men’s and Women’s Team Sprint, qualification at midnight, finals at 2 a.m.
- **Wednesday, February 21 —** Men’s and Women’s 30K Classic, 10:15 p.m.
- **Saturday, February 24 —** Men’s 50K Classic, 8:30 p.m.

Learn more at olympic.org/pyeongchang2018 and nbcolympics.com.

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Reese Brown
PHOTO BY MICHAEL DINNEEN PHOTOGRAPHY

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Learn more at olympic.org/pyeongchang2018 and nbcolympics.com.