ANCHORAGE: A season of snow, successes and fun

EAGLE RIVER: A ski beach party to remember a friend

KACHEMAK: A community of skiers, volunteers make trails

Anchorage . . . . . . . . . . . . . 2
Eagle River . . . . . . . . . . . . . 9
Girdwood . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 13
Fairbanks . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 14
Kachemak . . . . . . . . . . . . . 10
Mat-Su . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 12
Statewide . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 7,8,11,15
we inadvertently left your name off.

possible to capture every name.

you to these people for your support.

appreciates all that individuals and

Brewer, Fred Stutzer, Steve McKeever, Gerald Bell, and Liska Snyder, Ed and Robin Kornfield, Ed


David Hulen, Tom Brooks, Ove Madsen, Georgia Miller, Iain Miller, Lydia Wirkus, Peggy Cobey, Ruth Hawkins, Alison Arians, Dan Schwartz, Randy Lauri Bassett, Heather Helzer, Ginger Hansell, Cason, Steve Beady, Gratis Dim, Tucker Stine, Matthew Alt, Bob Stehn, Helen Mitchell, Reno Deprey, Rebecca Woods, Ashley Panter, Mike Panter, Dave Wolf, Julie Cooper, Jon Davis, Barbara Amy, Chris Rygh, Jane Hatch, Jennifer Wingate, Jennifer Wingard, Dana Showmaker, Carl Oswald, Benji Uffenbeck, Ken Palmquist, Steve Thomas, Karen Busch, Karen Gunnill, Steve Compton, John Murray, Dana Griffin, Renec Rej, Mary Haney, Joie Morse, Jill Barlow, Kristin Shaffer, Kelly Pritchard, Deana Watson, Joan Kluwe, Mike Burns, Alycia Loran, Alyse Loran, Pete Robinson, Rachel Samuelsen, Ryan Gough, Sam Miller, Sara Miller, Donald Wynn Watts and a lot of people to choose from to finish frusr and remove stores this:

Tour of Anchorage 2018 - Dianne Moxness Saari; Chief Volunteers: Alyse Loran, Alice Knapp, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501 225-6667 nsaa@alaska.net

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No snow, low snow or more snow, no problem for NSAA’s Operations team

Once again, the season needed a jumpstart. Snowmaking parameters at Kincaid Park were pushed toward the upper limit to gain as much base despite the warmer temps. No races were canceled for lack of snow, however.

U.S. Nationals had a rough start with 36 degrees and rain for the first night of Grooming. A day or two later, the temperatures dropped and Nature kicked in and made snow for all the trails. From then on, the season was flawless. We could not have asked for a better season.

The NSAA Operations crew would like to extend a well-deserved “Thank you!” to all the NSAA staff, volunteers and others for making this year’s ski season a huge success/tolerable!

The priority this summer will be in-depth maintenance/repair of grooming and snowmaking equipment and facilities. Trail restoration projects will be secondary but if there is a window of opportunity we will work on one, or all, of the following: Moose Hill, Stairway to Heaven, 4 Corners crossing trail at Kincaid and/or spot repair and erosion control as required on the Hillside and Chugach/Eagle River trails.

The NSAA Operations staff wishes you a safe and fun summer. Enjoy the trails!

NSAA season roundup

Smaller Ski Train, bigger fun for director, participants

“Giving our guests a great experience on Ski Train is the most important goal,” Travis Taylor said, addressing volunteers as they prepared to load the Alaska Railroad a few days from the big event.

Positivity and optimism radiate from Travis, NSAA’s Ski Train Director, his first year filling this volunteer role after many years in as the luggage car team leader. Travis’ work experience as the Director of Tour Operations with Alaska Premier, makes him a perfect fit leading NSAA’s annual Ski Train event.

Travis faced a lot of change with this year’s train with the biggest being a smaller train. Cutbacks with space meant fewer volunteers including the polka band and Ski Patrol. The hardest task is keeping the event true to its history and accomplishing this with less people. His approach? He pulled in key volunteers to help find solutions.

Change is hard, but the volunteer team saw this as a chance to be more efficient, utilizing volunteer teams in multiple ways. Another secret weapon: working with Travis is fun! Everyone hiccup or challenge is tackled with optimism and energy from Travis, and it’s contagious! Thanks Travis and the entire volunteer team!

— By Erin Beam, NSAA

Even cold, Ski For Women never gets old

Cold was the word of the day at this year’s Alaska Ski for Women, but that didn’t stop over 500 women of all ages from crossing the finish line in their ConocoPhillips bibs at the 22nd annual event. Participants and supporters enjoyed a bluebird day filled with beautifully groomed trails, dazzling costumes, delicious bread from Great Harvest Bread Co. and coffee from Kaladi Brothers Coffee. Oh, did I mention the chocolate? Each participant received a gourmet chocolate bar courtesy of Birdwings Fine Chocolate.

We had a total of 646 registrants this year, 35 of whom participated in the Duathlon, 106 participated in the freestyle/skate race, and 176 raced in the classic event. All finishers will be eligible for the Triple Patch Program. The Mardi Gras of the North costume contest entrants surprised the judges with their exciting costumes this year, making choosing the winners difficult! Our overall winner was the Iditarod Huskies group, which also won the award for the highest number of team members.

Alaska Ski for Women raises awareness and funds for an issue experienced by half of women in Alaska: domestic violence. Our 2017 grantees had booths in the chalet: AWAIC, Running Free Alaska, YWCA Anchorage, STAR, and Seaview Community Services. All of race participants received free chocolate bars courtesy of Birdwings Fine Chocolate.

Energy, determination and a cool costume – this young 2018 Ski For Women participant had it all!

Photos by Jen Ahst
Great snow. Great Olympians. Great photos?

Enter your season’s best in the NSAA Photo Contest

It’s primetime for crust skiing photos, which is a reminder that the 2018 NSAA Photo Contest deadline arrives on May 31. The contest is open to all Alaska Nordic ski club members and entrants may submit three images per category.

The categories are: Racing; Touring/Backcountry; Jumping; Kids on Skis; Grooming/Groomed Trails; Biathlon; Fun Ski Events; and Recreational/Casual Skiing. Prizes will be awarded to first-, second- and third-place selections in each category, as well as a grand prize overall winner. Winners also will be featured in the annual NSAA calendar and in an issue of the Alaska Nordic Skier newsletter.

Send digital photo files and an entry form to aadams@anchoragenordicski.com with “PHOTO CONTEST” in subject line. File format should be JPG and size should be between .05 MB and 5 MB. Please visit anchoragenordicski.com/nsaa-photo-contest/ for more information and the entry form. Contact NSAA’s Amber Adams at aadams@anchoragenordicski.com or (907) 276-7609 with questions or comments.

The Alaska Nordic Skier’s Eric Parson’s stunning shot of “Camping Near Anaktuvuk Pass” and Nathan Jones picturesque “Sunny Tracks” were among the top shots in the 2017 NSAA Photo Contest.

Starting running again

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

It has been a breakthrough season for APU and American cross-country skiing, and I would like to extend my congratulations to athletes and supporters at all levels. You’re riding high on the possibility of new heights for American skiing and you want to do your part. And while this ski season is nearly over, you’re already making training plans for the season to come.

Let me help you with a safe transition from skiing to running.

1. Taking your run outside:
   a. Decrease your distances!
   Let your body slowly build up bone, muscle and tendon strength. Allow appropriate rest time between runs so your body can repair. Run every other day, or even every two days if you haven’t been running much over the winter. Don’t worry about your pace for the first few weeks. Let your body adapt to the increased demands you are placing on it.
   b. Vary terrain and intensity.
   Variety will not allow your body to repeat a movement mistake over a long period of time.
   c. Write down your goals and make a training plan. Start with your end goal in mind and then work backwards. Gradually build up your distance, intensity and terrain tolerance.

2. How about your feet?
   a. Chose the right footwear.
   Have professionals help you; they can assess your feet, gait and find the right shoes. Your running shoe should feel comfortable right away, there is no “getting used to it.”
   b. Do not forget to address the strength of your feet and lower legs! Our feet weaken and atrophy during the winter. Lift and spread your toes, walk on toes, walk on heels. (Check the January issue of Nordic Ski for more on this!)

3. Cross training:
   Hip and core strength are tremendously important. Cross training prevents injuries, makes you fit, and you won’t get bored.
   Body weight and free weights exercises, balance, plyometrics, and mobility give you more benefit than machines. Did I mention the Nature Gym? Alaska’s outdoors has it all!

4. Address your weaknesses:
   You cannot be stronger than your weakest link! By nature, we practice and develop skills or exercises that come relatively easy to us. We usually don’t go out of our way to learn a skill that is awkward, unfamiliar or challenging. It is difficult and we may feel uncoordinated and weak like a baby giraffe! Ask for help from your fellow runners and coaches, or seek professional help from a physiotherapist.

#ChoosePT #aptofalaska

Do you want to learn more? Come see us at Advanced Physical Therapy! Call for an appointment at any of our five locations statewide.
NSAA Spotlight:
Tom Grenier, an extraordinary coach

It's remarkable to think that one man has singlehandedly built a high school ski team, starting with a handful of students, steadily increasing to a fairly large group today. This team is gaining ground, becoming more competitive with the top Nordic contenders in the district today. Part of this growth is related to the successful grant pursuits by this same individual for new Nordic gear, properly equipping a team where most don't own their own skis and boots as first time cross-country skiers. This man is Tom Grenier, a highly dedicated coach who has brought the Bartlett High school to new heights.

In addition to school skiing, Tom has also coached local youth biathlon for more years than most parents can count, investing countless hours and energy to furthering the sport. His efforts have instilled a love and enthusiasm to hundreds over the years as shown with many of his athletes returning as coaches later. As the lead coach of the Eagle Eyes biathlon program, Tom has developed many biathletes, many who have advanced to intercollegiate and national levels. He also coaches masters groups, as well as new junior biathletes firing a rifle for the first time.

Exemplary leadership skills were evident as Tom recently orchestrated Anchorage's local biathlon race series, pulling together volunteers, setting courses and executing quality competition. Race directing for Tom takes place after long days of teaching and coaching the high school ski team. The most amazing feat this season was witnessing Tom coach juniors racing in the final Arctic Winter Games trial while simultaneously coordinating the ASD race hosted by Bartlett. Despite the juggling act, Tom was extraordinary.

Tom sets the bar high, prioritizing his athletes, giving back to the Nordic community and selflessly volunteering to further biathlon in Alaska. Thank you, Tom Grenier, for your contributions to Biathlon and the entire Nordic community!

ConocoPhillips has proudly supported recreational and competitive Nordic skiing across Alaska for 25 years.

Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage
Alaska Ski for Women
Ski for Kids
Junior Nordic
Tour of Anchorage
Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks
NANA Nordic Skiku
Cross Country Alaska Besh Cup Race Series
APU Nordic Ski Center
2018 U.S. Cross Country Ski Championships

Congratulations to all of Alaska’s Olympic skiers, and to Kikkan Randall for her historic gold medal performance in PyeongChang! ConocoPhillips looks forward to seeing more Alaskan champions at every level.
entries, donations, merchandise sales and funds raised during the silent auction will be donated in June 2018 to programs and organizations who are actively working to stop the cycle of domestic violence against women and children. Funds are also distributed to organizations that provide resources to domestic violence victims and their families.

Alaska Ski for Women appreciates the support of our major sponsors, who help ensure our ability to provide 100 percent of the event income to our grantees. We are especially grateful to ConocoPhillips, our 2018 Platinum Sponsor and race bib sponsor who generously supports this community event every year. Thank you to Gold Sponsor KTUU for their continued support and promotion of the event. Other sponsors include: GCI, Anchorage Women’s Clinic, Banker Law Group, Denali OB-GYN, Premier Alaska Tours, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Moose’s Tooth & Bears Tooth, REI, Magic 98.9, TOKO, Skinny Raven, Turnagain Training, Alaska EyeCare, Alaska Medical Solutions and Hartman Orthodontics. We received over 60 in-kind silent auction donations from Alaska businesses and community members this year, which brought in over $4,000!


Save the date: Alaska Ski for Women February 3, 2019. Email alaskaski4women@gmail.com to learn how you can get involved or become a sponsor!

—By Jenny Di Grappa, Alaska Ski for Women director

Young Alaskans were flying high at Western Regionals, from left to right, Rosen Woods, Carter Brubaker, Jude Jochens, Skyler Amy and Dylan Amy.

Young Alaskans aimed for the sky in NSAA Nordic Jumping

Alaska ski jumpers and Nordic combiners ended the winter season with strong finishes in regional, national and international competitions! Anchorage hosted 56 ski jumpers from five national divisions February 21-24 at the Karl Eid National and International competitions! An athlete shoots from the prone position at Arctic Winter Games trials in Anchorage.

NSAII Biathlon hits bullseye with another great season

As the season ends, we reflect on the 2018 biathlon season and thank the people who made this possible. This year’s biathlon events included Arctic Winter Games trials, as well as weekly races and the ABA Gold Nugget Series—there were seven Anchorage races. We had snow and happy athletes who who shot clean or skied penalty laps without complaint. We could not have done this without volunteers. It takes almost twice as many volunteers than athletes to put on a biathlon event.

We would like to thank those volunteers who are the heart of our biathlon community.

Doug Cobb ensures our range is in working order and does behind-the-scenes work which includes organizing lead abatement and fixing fussy little electrical problems. He attends all community meetings and often volunteers to be a range safety officer.

Jack Porter is always at Kincaid or on the range. He made our range accessible for internet, offers regular safety training classes and opportunities for individuals to shoot. If you wonder why our Conex is so organized, hats off to Jack.

Marsha Bandy is our number and timing expert. She tracks our money and doesn’t fear spreadsheets or complicated details involved in tallying race results. She efficiently condenses all the information into clean results.

Scott Beleyea’s brings wisdom and knowledge from racing internationally and coordinating races. Scott knows just about everything you can about biathlon and is always there to help new athletes and make sure we are following the rules. He is often a range safety officer for our races and both local biathlon teams.

Tom Grenier is our dedicated biathlon race coordinator who put together a fantastic seven-race series. Tom makes our races fun and provides all Anchorage athletes opportunities to practice their skills in competition. We have more biathlon races than any Alaska community, and we draw participants from around the state. Thank Tom for making that happen.

Michael Millhollin is our well qualified experienced armor. He keeps triggers, stocks and rifles in good working order. He keeps us on track, stocks and sights in working order and keeps track of our rifles. He works closely with Steve Shamburek, who is in charge of our scholarship rifle program. This season we were able to give scholarship rifles to eight youth. Thanks to Steve!

Mike Risier is ever-effervescent and has ideas about ways we can grow our program and partner with other clubs. He strengthened our partnership with SKIKU, who generously let us use their laser rifles at several events.
An exciting, snowy and historic Tour of Anchorage

Nearly 800 skiers completed the 30th Tour of Anchorage on March 4 by skiing and striding across town on impeccably groomed Nordic trails, through multi-use greenbelts, over bridges and through tunnels.

After a dearth of snow for much of the winter had Tour organizers considering contingency plans, consistent snowfall in February brought out hundreds of late entrants for the full 25-, 40- and 50-kilometer events amid ideal trail and weather conditions. More than 100 volunteers and the efforts of a dedicated organizing crew made the event possible.

Six kilometers from the end of the signature 50K, Jack Novak of the Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center broke away from challengers Seth Downs and Forrest Mahlen to claim his first Tour in 2 hours, 16 minutes and 49 seconds.

University of Alaska Anchorage teammates Hannah Radd and Michaela Koller-Miller, each skiing their first 50K, took the first two spots for the women with Rudd victorious in 2:38:54 (due to NCAA rules, the college skiers were not permitted to claim their prize money). Olympian Jessica Yeaton was a late scratch due to illness.

In the 40K, which started at Service High School but skipped the notorious Spencer Loop, Lisa Anglen (2:10:13 edged Meredith Noble by 13 seconds and Naomi Kiektinved by 17 seconds. Andrew Boone of Bend, Ore., dominated the men’s 40K in 1:47:46.

In the 25K freestyle, 15-year-old Joel Power nipped 50-year-old Gary Di Silvestri by less than four seconds in 1:15:39. The women’s race, from APU to Kincaid Park Chalet, was nearly as close with Emily Lints of Homer (1:30:39) beating Becky Butler by 14 seconds. Both were cheered up the final hill by spectators and racers who basked in sunlight amid a festive atmosphere that included music, food, beer, awards and door prizes.

Hannah Rowland of Glennallen won women’s 25K classic in 1:47:06 while Gary Snyder was victorious for the men in 1:27:16. Other notables included Reno Degrey, age 87, who finished the 25K classic in 3 hours. Bruce Talbot, the only person to complete every Tour, won the 60-69-year-old age group for the 40K in 2:26:01.

The final NSAA Jr. Nordic practice of the season turned into a Kincaid Park party!

STATEWIDE

Alaska biathletes aim high across state, nation and world

ANCHORAGE

Fundamentals and fun on and off the trails for Jr. Nordic skiers

The 2017-18 season of NSAA Jr. Nordic introduced a new director, Shannon Donley, hundreds of happy young skiers, and a handful of coaches. In fact, session two had 600 young skiers, many of whom closed out the season skiing with Alaska’s Olympians at Kincaid Park. The youngsters also helped pass out medals at US Nationals in January. And, of course, there were really cool new Jr. Nordic jackets thanks to UBS and ConocoPhillips.

This season included nine groups: Mon/Wed/Sat 6:30 Kincaid (coaches Geoff/Write and John Hemelt); Tues/Thurs/Sat 6:30 Kincaid (Branden Fontana); Mon/Wed/Sat 4:30 Kincaid (Sam Cason); Tues/Thurs/Sat 4:30 Kincaid (John Hemelt); Mon/Wed/Sat 6:30 Hillside (Dave Ward); Tues/Thurs/Sat 6:30 Hillside (Dan Bosch); Mon/Wed/Sat 4:30 (Heidi Sheldon); Tues/Thurs/Sat 4:30 (Heidi Sheldon); Mon/Wed/Sat Russian Jack (Art Harmon); and Tues/Thurs/Sat Russian Jack (Art Harmon). The new 4:30 afterschool groups were a big success for newer/younger skiers.

Coaches had an end of season party that included a visit from Kikkan Randall, who thanked them, showed off her gold medal and told them about how she got her start with Anchorage Junior Nordic. Other TNJ notes: a huge thanks to Great Harvest for donating cookies for our Cookie Tour; be sure to find the awesome story about Jr. Nordic by Vicki Ho in Anchorage Daily News; Art Harmon took his Hawks (fastest group on a weekend backcountry ski trip which he does annually) (14 Hawks attended this year); and at the last day of practice, all groups (from all areas) got together at Kincaid Park, followed by juice and cookies.

— Shannon Donley, NSAA Junior Nordic director

Anchorage Biathlon Club takes on the world

BY HELEN WILSON

Rigorous training under coaches Marine Dusser and Marion Botessi, both alumni of the French School of Biathlon, paid off for Anchorage Biathlon Club members. Three athletes qualified for the Youth Jr. World Championships in Otepaa, Estonia; three qualified to represent Team Alaska in Arctic Winter Games, Hay River, Canada; and one qualified for 2018 Junior Nationals Cross Country Ski Championships at Soldier Hollow, Utah. ABC also sent biathletes to Czech Republic and Slovenia for IBU Junior Cup #3 and Junior Open European Championships.

The biathlon race season started with the Minnesota trials in December. Helen Wilson (Alaska Nordic Racing/Eagle River High) placed first and second in both races, missing one target during the first race. Grace Gilliland (Chugiak/Alaska Pacific University/South High) placed sixth and third. Maxime Germain (APU/West High) placed ninth and fourth in sprint races.

Grace and Helen earned slots on Team USA and raced at IBU Junior Cup #3, Junior Open European Championships and Worlds. While in Slovenia, the Julian Alps received almost two meters of snow in 30 hours. Most rest days were spent shoveling out the team vans. Grace, Helen and Maxime raced for USA at the Biathlon Youth-Junior World Championships, Otepaa, Estonia. ABC sent Torsten Renner (ANR/Chugiak High); Elias Watson (AWS/
and Mark Eggener (APU/Romig Middle) to the Arctic Winter Games 2018. Torsten and Mark each won two golds, one silver and the relay teams captured a bronze.

Showing that Biathletes can ski fast, Maja Lapkass (APU/West High) qualified for Team Alaska after success in the Besh Cup Series. Maja placed 18th in the 5K classic and 45th in the skate sprint at the U.S. Junior National Cross Country Ski Championships, in Soldier Hollow. Anchorage Biathlon Club has full summer planned of training and camps. Learn more at anchoragebiathlonclub.com.

Ruminations from a new biathlon fan
BY BENJAMIN BRAGONIER

Cold wind with hard-driving snow didn’t stand a chance of dampening Hay River’s appetite for more biathlon. In fact, our Canadian hosts injected a healthy dose of well-received levity into the last day of AWG 2018 races as coaches, officials, volunteers and athletes donned spectacular headgear, fairy wings, eyepatches, mustaches and gaudy spandex leggings.

Due to the relay race format, some familiar faces on the podium were joined by some new smiling faces. They all worked hard, so it was good to see broader recognition.

Here’s the barest of information to help put the AWG relay race format into perspective: juveniles (11-15) always shoot prone and juniors (16-18) alternate between standing and prone. Individual race format: ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe. Sprint race format: ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe. (Juniors do one additional shoot and ski/snowshoe. Sprint race format: ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe. Sprint race format: ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe - shoot - ski/snowshoe. Therefore, each round is staggered starts. At a rough estimate, there were 30 officials and volunteers on deck for each event. You need way more than a ref and two linesmen for biathlon.

Mass start format: An individual race as described above, but everybody starts at the same time. Athletes can see their competition and develop a race strategy to chase them down. Conversely, athletes might hear competitors panting behind them and this may inspire or deflate the will to race harder.

The relay format included coaches selecting three out of four members of a given mixed-gender age group, where each team member completes the equivalent of an individual sprint race. However, unlike the sprint race, athletes are provided with three extra rounds to be used if they do not knock down all five targets using a standard five-round magazine. Each extra round is hand-loaded. This takes time, it’s bloody cold and you’re wearing gloves!

Oh, and if you use all three extra “relay rounds” and still didn’t knock down all five targets, then you get to ski penalty loops. That’s insult to injury!

At the AWG, athletes who are not officially part of a relay team are paired up with other contingents and become “mixed teams.” They race for fun, sportsmanship and to uphold the Arctic Winter Games spirit. Biathlon will test your mental and physical mettle. If you ever meet a real honest-to-goodness biathlete (not an armchair biathlete fan like me) ask them about their sport. Biathlon is demanding and its fascinating history is founded in part due to roughly hewn competitions of northern hunting prowess, Norse mythology, and in part by the alternative to Finnish military service where citizens could choose to learn how to ski and shoot as part of a home guard.

I’m not sure why these kids love skiing, snowshoeing and target shooting in spandex when it’s 10 below, but I love that they love it. Biathletes and their community are affable, fantastic and welcoming. They’re also safe, smart, fair, supportive and inclusive. They’re also healthy and fun to be around.

Last, a big shout-out goes to Team Alaska Biathlon Arctic Winter Games 2018 coaches Simon, Kimberly, Amanda and Keith! You managed to keep track of 32 skis, 32 ski poles, 16 snowshoes, 16 rifles, 16 events and 16 people. (Your athletes may not tell you directly, but they all think you can walk on water.)
The Chugach Eagle-River Nordic Ski Club’s annual Ski the Beach Race was different this season. Typically a low-key, late-season fundraiser for CERNSC, this year it served as a memorial race to honor and remember a local skier, Erin K. Johnson, who died last June. The outpouring of support and participation was phenomenal. A sunny day with fresh snow and perfectly groomed trails set the stage for a great event, with race distances ranging from 1-15K. With 66 participants pre-registered online, the race organizers hoped for a large turnout. They were amazed when the final tally came to 202 racers and skiers. Club members could not recall a larger turnout.

Held at the Beach Lake trails, the race always has a “beach” theme, which carried on this year. Skiers of all ages sported Hawaiian shirts, board shorts, grass skirts, and flower leis. There were even a few costumed skiers including a chicken and a squid. The event embodied Erin’s spirit, who always had fun dressing up in silly costumes and found any reason to celebrate and enjoy the outdoors. The racers included members of the Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska Nordic ski communities, as well as many of Erin’s friends and family.

To round out the tropical theme, race winners won pineapples, while second and third place finishers won mangos. Handmade wood-burned birch medals, made by Alycia Beiergrohstein, were also given to the top three finishers in each race. Many local businesses donated great prizes for the winners and a raffle after the races. These businesses included Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking, REI, Barney’s Sports Chalet, Skinny Raven Sports, Jitters, Coldstone Creamery, and Carrs-Safeway. The generous prize donations by local businesses were appreciated and added to the fun, festive event.

CERNSC year-end report

Spring Break and perfect snow. We had too little snow for the start of the season, but Beach Lake trail system was always skiable, at least on the flatter sections, thanks to persistent grooming efforts. During late-February to mid-March, the snow was about perfect everywhere.

The ski club had a great Jr. Nordic program this year – 158 kids, 32 coaching parents and many other helpers. Rish Harty and Ryan Caldwell did an amazing job in their first year as coordinators taking over the reins from Will Taygan. We’re also fortunate to have Alaska Nordic Racing’s Kati Rehm heading up our Master’s Program. We had a wonderful Ski the Beach race on February 25, with 259 skiers present to honor Erin Johnson. The club currently has 117 members, all considered as families with unknown numbers of kids, friends and neighbors. If you ski at Beach Lake trails, please go online https://cernsc.wildapricot.org/ and join or renew your membership.

Our ski club hopes to initiate trail maintenance projects over the summer. Stay tuned for emails as plans are made. Cutting of brush, improving drainage, and trail rejuvenation are never-ending needs.

With low snow that is typical of early season conditions, smooth trails are a must. Other ski club projects may include adding more rental skis to the club’s supply and improving our website and communications.

Our volunteer-based organization is better with your support. Please stay involved and help the club move toward activities and initiatives that you want to see happen.

— Bob Stehn, CERNSC treasurer
By Jeannie Woodring

Big hills with million dollar views, fast flat stretches with open vistas, and peaceful trails winding through sprouce and alder – you can ski on more than 20K of such awesome Nordic terrain at the McNeil Canyon School-Eveline State Recreation Area (SRA) (McNeil-Eveline) ski areas in Homer.

Thanks to the hard work done by the neighborhood nearly 40 years ago, today’s skiers get to enjoy these great trails. Back in the late 1970s-early 1980s, the families living in the McNeil-Eveline vicinity built snow machines to reach their neighbors’ houses. Around 1980, Spike Christopher set ski tracks in his property using two pieces of wood, odd scraps of metal, welding and chains to groom. His daughter grew up using the trail and went on to the Junior Nationals. John Fitzpatrick made a trail from his house to Christopher’s and had a trail running across a swamp to Derek Stonorov’s house. Mike Flora had trails running into the hills and to his neighbors’ houses and neighbors continued to snow machine new trails.

“Everyone had trails wherever they wanted,” says Fitzpatrick. When the McNeil Canyon School was built in 1983, Flora, Stonorov and Fitzpatrick started building good ski trails for the school to use, which started the McNeil Canyon trail system.

As they routed new trails around trees, they also hooked up trails to area homes so kids could ski to school. New sprint loops were put into place. The spruce bark beetle outbreak had weakened and killed trees for years, so fallen trees had to be cleared every winter. With skate skiing becoming popular, trails needed to be widened – which was hard to do on volunteer time with one snow machine. Pieces of the older trail had to be rerouted because of bad angles, glaciations, and other environmental factors.

The McNeil group joined the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club (KNSC) in the late 1990s. Immediately, funding from the KNSC helped with more snow machines and trail widening.

Each year, the McNeil-Eveline system has improved. In the early 2000s, 80 acres donated by Edmund Schuster and his family became the Eveline SRA. Spearheaded by longtime Nordic advocate Dave Brann, the KNSC took over managing and maintaining Eveline. Land ownership questions were resolved. New trails appeared. A new connector trail had to be rerouted because of bad angles, glaciations, and other environmental factors.

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Borough land, they got the required permits and permission to construct a new 7.5K trail system in the late 1990s.

Other issues arose when the new trail went into place. The spruce bark beetle outbreak had weakened and killed trees for years, so fallen trees had to be cleared every winter. With skate skiing becoming popular, trails needed to be widened – which was hard to do on volunteer time with one snow machine. Pieces of the older trail had to be rerouted because of bad angles, glaciations, and other environmental factors.

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And with all this support, what has happened to the original groomers – Flora, Stonorov and Fitzpatrick? They’re still on the trails.

Flora straps on his backcountry skis and goes kite surfing in the hills behind Homer. Stonorov still heads the groomer group at McNeil, spending countless hours grooming the trails. He also helps with the in-school Nordic program at McNeil Canyon Elementary – a school that decided every child should have a pair of skis. While the KNSC grooms the school trails, the school provides parking for the skiers and other support, as needed.

And what’s John Fitzpatrick doing? He often rides his mountain bike with studded tires in the high backcountry. “This year, there seems to be a new group of groomers,” he says. “So it’s time for me to ride off into the sunset.”

This old school track settter was the early groomer of one Alaska’s most unique trail systems.

By the early 1990s, the skiers got the required permits and permission to construct a new 7.5K trail system in the late 1990s.
Business community gives great support to KNSC

For nearly 40 years, the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club (KNSC) has enjoyed creating, maintaining, and skiing trails around Homer. And for 40 years, support from Homer’s business community has helped keep the KNSC on track. Some businesses donate cash. Others contribute in-kind goods and/or services. Thanks to these donations (and the volunteer hours contributed by skiers), the KNSC now has:

• Four superb ski areas with great views and over 70k of groomed trails
• Ski programs for every skill level
• Social events from October – April
• One of Alaska’s most active and involved ski communities – especially for a community of this size

The KNSC’s different sponsorship levels and their contributors are included below.

The Banner Club: Businesses that give $1,000 or more cash or in-kind contribution in one ski season. Banners for these sponsors have been hung on the tunnel fencing at the Lookout Mountain Nordic Ski Area. These donors include:

• Ulmer’s Chain Reaction Sports: For years, Ulmer’s has donated auction items and prizes for many of the KNSC events, from races to social gatherings. Last year, Ulmer’s donated $800 in ski equipment to the Women’s Nordic program.

• Fritz Creek General Store: Each year, this eclectic store out East End Road has donated $1,000 in fuel to power the grooming equipment at McNeil Canyon School and Eveline State Recreation Area.

• Bear Creek Winery: This Homer-based winery gives half cash and half in-kind donations of its local wines. The wine entertains skiers at KNSC’s annual wine and cheese tour and serves as prizes for many ski events.

APU, USA, AK celebrate season with a golden glow

What a season for Alaska’s Nordic skiers, America’s elite skiers and the APU Nordic Ski Center coaches and skiers! Alaska-based and -raised skiers, and skiers from the APU program, made up the majority of the U.S. Cross-Country Ski Team that made medal history at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea. APU head coach and director Erik Flora was part of the U.S. coaching squad. And Kikkan Randall, longtime APU member and Alaska’s – and America’s – greatest skiing star, cemented her legacy by winning a historic gold medal with U.S. teammate Jessie Diggins.

• Homer Saw and Cycle: Sure, you can get your chainsaws fixed with this sponsor. For the KNSC, this store is famous for giving a generous amount of gear for prizes, auction items and donations for all fundraising events.

• Whirling Rainbow Foundation: A non-profit focused on cultivating unity, peace, wisdom and understanding through the arts, this business is located near the Lookout Mountain State Recreation Area.

• Grog Shop: A longtime patron of many non-profit events in Homer, The Grog Shop donates wine to a total of $1,000 or more for KNSC events.

Skier Level Sponsors: Businesses and often individuals donate at least $200 a year. This season, the KNSC had eight sponsors at this level:

• Spruce Acre Cabins, Salmon Sisters, Homer Veterinary Clinic, Home Run Oil, Lakeshore Glass, Kachemak Auto Parts, Cozy Cove Inn, and Elizabeth Whitney, LCSW.

Patron Hats: All individual, family and business members receive Patron hats for cash donations of $150 or more. For each $150, the donor(s) get a KNSC hat from Homer Saw and Cycle. For example, an individual member at $150 gets one hat; a patron family membership at $300 gets two hats; and a membership at $1,000 gets three hats. For the 2017-2018 ski season, the KNSC had 45 patron-level sponsors.
A season and Nordic community to be thankful for

As the final days of the ski season come to a close, the snow will gradually recede back up into the mountains. Government Peak Recreation Area trails will be the first to go, but there should be plenty of trail skiing at Archangel, possibly well into May with all the snow we had this season. Make sure to take advantage of the crust skiing at Independence Mine.

As the snow retreats, our groomers will follow it up into the Pass as they did last year when they groomed Archangel for skiing in May. Those that were groomers become maintenance volunteers in the summer, keeping the trails clear of brush and mowing the trails at GPRA at least once a month. For many of you, this happens under the radar, but without their efforts skiing in the Valley would not happen.

Many of the volunteers have put in extraordinary efforts over the years. But like many clubs, it is the same folks who step up time and again and we have begun to suffer from volunteer burn out. Additionally, we have more projects and trails to maintain as time goes on, which requires more effort.

This coming summer, we will be finishing the new competition trails, readying them for the final step of seeding. Work will commence soon and continue through the end of July. We will need lots of help with this and hope you will be a part of our efforts. For those of you who have kids in Junior Nordics, this is a great opportunity to teach them community support through action. Watch your emails and social media for calls for help.

As the trail system at GPRA continues to grow, we require more and newer equipment to maintain the trails. The Board of Directors will be considering a larger mower ($15,000) that will decrease the amount of time to mow trails, considering that we now have about twice the total mileage of trails, and the new ones are wider than the older trails. Not only do we need equipment for grooming and maintenance, we also need a place to store the equipment. The Board is now considering a storage building at GPRA to house our equipment. The cost could be greater than $750,000, by far the biggest project that the club has ever attempted. Locating the building at GPRA is problematic and we are getting a lot of help from the Borough for location and design.

I’d like to express the gratitude from the board and myself to all the volunteers over the past season. From groomers to trail workers to Junior Nordic steering committee, all of you make our skiing community possible.

This season we want to recognize the following folks: Linneae Alverts, Gene Backus, Shane Barber, Shannon Bodolay, Rebecca Buchanan, Rhett Buchanan, Stacie Burkhart, Caitlin Buxbaum, Gil Cear, David Cheezem, Kathy Christy, Ryan Collins, Megan Danz, Kevin Fagerstrom, Daryl Farrens, Emily Forstner, Dave Freer, Lynn Fuller, Chris Gierymski, Dan Harrison, Gabriel Henneman, Hans Hill, Tammy Hill, Karen Hopp, Charity House, Tracy Houser, Jeremy Houston, Pete Houston, Jerry Hupp, Faith Itta, Lisa Jaeger, Dan Jenkins, Alex Johnson, Chris Jones, Jeff Kase, Sarah Kelley, Jack Klayum, David Knopp, Aly Kopsock, Lance Kopsock, Ed Kornfeld, Robin Kornfeld, Nate Kristich, Peggy Kristich, Bailey LaRousse, Stephanie LaRousse, Amanda Lund, James Lynn, Larry Lynn, Lorene Lynn, Ben Marvin, Christy Marvin, David Marvin, Lindy Marvin, Nora Matell, Alan McClain, Josh McKinley, Steven Merritt, Joe Moore, Jillian Morrissey, Sheri Musgrave, John Naylor, Katie Naylor, Jeff Nofike, Mike Norton, Barbara Parker, Harold Parker, Kade Parker, Lucas Parker, Simeon Ramirez, Dylan Saunders, Greg Sculby, Manveer Singh, Tom Smadya, Sojija Spiac, Kirby and Aubrey Spangler, Galen Sparks, Joel Stamoolis, Naomi Stamoolis, Anj Steer, Zach Steer, Mark Stigar, Stacie Stigar, Ed Strabel, Glynn Strabel, Mark Strabel, Stacy Strabel, Ava Straub, Lori Straub, Brent Taylor, Kim Taylor, Ocean Tennant, Sydney Thielke, Chris Tomson, Kevin Tuning, Victoria Vinson, Stan Walker, Dylan Watts, Bill Weiss, Brittyn Werner, Rya Whittington-Evans, Mike Wilson, Ashley Wise, Maritt Youngblood, Chancy Zahrt, Billie’s Dad.

No doubt some of you have dropped off my list and I apologize if your name does not appear here.
— Dave Musgrave, MSNc president

Spring Fling
There is only one way to end a season -- with a bang! On Saturday April 7, we celebrated the ski season, our volunteers, and raise funds for our beloved club with live music from Flintlock and fresh maly/hoppy beverages from Arkose Brewery. We also had a live auction for two ski/binding packages from our great sponsor Backcountry Bike and Ski and a silent auction for a myriad of other great items from local establishments. The board members provided a great spread for munchies and members provided the great banter and socializing.
THANK YOU!
We sincerely thank all Groomers, Volunteers and Members for your support during the 2017-18 Season. See you on the trails!

GNSC Board
Members:
Deb Essex
Brian Burnett
Jim Braham
Peter Zug
Justin Thomas
Briana Sullivan
Art Stiassny

Members/Volunteers:
Mark & Christine Flanum
Samuel Flora
Forget-Me-Not-Nursery LLC
Four Valleys Community School
Jerry & Carol Fox
Lauren Fritz
Glenn Gellert
Geo Contracting
Becky Germian
Girdwood Brewing Company
Girdwood Jr. High Ski Team
Jacky Graham
Geoff Gross
Rorie Hammel
Scott & Becky Hauser
Kari Hendrich
The Hickox Family
Holly Hill
Holly & Darby Hobson
Laurie Holland
Kathy Peters & Jim Braham
Jody Jenkins
Jolie & Krag Johnson
Ginger Johnson
Julie & Peter Johnson
Kathy Joy-Holmes
Janet Kellam & Andy Munter
Kyle & Stacy Kelley

Dan Kiland
Colleen Kirkpatrick
Peter Kling
Gunner & Alice Knapp
Donna Knutson
Joseph Kurkat
Maggie Laufenberg
Laurie Lowosek Tryck
Mike & Karen Loso
Kari Lovett
Kathy Lowe
Jason Lucas
Nathan Lukes DDS
Carol Makar
Sandy Mapes
Mark & Viktoria Chilkote
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Dave and Elaine McCambridge
McDermott Family
Bob & Sally Messing
Richard Mize
Catherine Moncrieff
Bob Mucha
Judy Palmer
Brian Pekar
Philip Peterson
Grace Pleasants
Ed Popek
Pat & Betsy Preis
Cyrus Read
Pamela Richter
Nicholas Riordan
Joseph Rowekamp & Amanda Snitzer
Jeff and Sharon Samuels
Jane Sauer & Family
Mark & Kathy Saugstad
Megan Schrantz
Greg Schumacher
Carven & Connie Scott
Stewart Seaberg
Camilla & Dave Seifert
Carolyn Seramur
Karen Shoemaker
Tim Simpson
Michael Smith
Toni Sparrow & The Gessner Clan
Jason Stancil
Eric Steinfort
Ari & Melanie Stiassny Family
Stinson Family
Briana Sullivan
Marc Esslinger
Ron Tenny
The Ice Cream Shop
Lou Theiss & Kerstin Johansson
Justin & Mary Thomas
John & Kathy Trautner
Alexander Treinen
The Ethan Tyler Family
Jim & Linda Waugaman
Wedeking Skiers
Jaime Welfelt
Debi Wickler
Lenny Wicks
Mary Wicks
Paul & Cindy Wilson and family
Jerney Wood
Z Architects
Peter Zug & Lin Hinderman

Special Thanks:
Alyeska Resort
Chugach Powder Guides

Members/Volunteers:
Crow Creek Mine
Steven Delatash
Laurie Derrick
Kevin Desmond
Chuck & Kerry Dorius
Dorlean Thomas
Ann Dougherty
Liz & Bud Dow
Eileen Driscoll
Sherry & Bob Dugan
The Durtschi Family
Howard Earl
JR Eker
Leah Ellis
Keith & Deb Essex
Jonas Family
Hillary Fell

Dan Kiland
Colleen Kirkpatrick
Peter Kling
Gunner & Alice Knapp
Donna Knutson
Joseph Kurkat
Maggie Laufenberg
Laurie Lowosek Tryck
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Jeff Samuels
Sharon Samuels
Tim Charon
Shane Bowlin
Mary Thomas
John Gallup
Mike Edgington
Jim Braham
Deb Essex
John Love

Groomers:
Eryn Boone
Ethan Tyler
Brian Burnett
Justin Thomas
Peter Zug
Jeff Samuels
Sharon Samuels
Tim Charon
Shane Bowlin
Mary Thomas
John Gallup
Mike Edgington
Jim Braham
Deb Essex
John Love
return of warmer weather while supporting the FXC program at the annual Spring Gala. The event will take place 7-11 p.m. Saturday, April 28, at the Birch Hill Ski Center and will include live music by Burnt Orange. Tickets are $20.

Contribute to the Trail Fund
The best skiing of the season is yet to come as it warms up. Trail fund contributions have been great, but we could still use more funding to help keep the awesome grooming going. Consider a donation before the end of the season. Please visit the club's website (nscfairbanks.org) to donate.

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

Q&A with Jennifer Williamson, NSCF Junior Nordics Co-Coordinator

How are you involved with the NSCF?
This is my second year coaching green and yellow groups for the Jr. Nordic Ski Program. Additionally, I have recently started working with Sally Endestad assisting and sharing the responsibility of Junior Nordics Program Coordinator.

How long have you been a cross-country skier? What do you remember about your first time on skis?
This is actually only my third season on cross-country ski! A good family friend, Rob Koenig, whom I have known for years, introduced me to skiing in 2016. I skied very infrequently at first, but after the first season I was hooked on the sport. I think I would have continued skiing even if it weren't for the 2020 pandemic, when we had to take a break from the sport.

What do you like about cross-country skiing?
Cross-country skiing is a lifelong sport. No matter what skill level, age, or gender everyone can enjoy the breathtaking scenery, getting out in the darker winter months Alaska brings, and the most friendly, kind and energetic bunch of people I have ever met.

Where do you like to cross-country ski and why?
I have only skied a few places in Alaska but my favorite of those few is Birch Hill. Sunnyside trails are my favorite because the white snow makes it easier to see the trail. I also like Birch Hill because there are so many options to choose from, and you can always find a new trail to try.

What do you like about Fairbanks?
I love the winter, the snow, the cold, and the people. I also enjoy the small town feel and the opportunity to explore the city like a local.

What other activities do you enjoy besides skiing?
I love baking! Sourdough bread is my specialty. I also roast my own coffee beans and have numerous fermenting “experiments” around the kitchen to include Kefir and Kombucha.

Find the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage on Facebook at – facebook.com/anarchogenordicski

Who’s Who in the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

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NSCF Volunteer Opportunities

INTERIOR AROUND THE INTERIOR

NSCF volunteer opportunities
Interior Alaska is one of the greatest cross-country ski communities in the country! We have an amazing group of dedicated volunteers who help make Fairbanks skiing great. The NSCF has formed several volunteer committees aimed at developing and maintaining our incredible trails, expanding the sport to new skiers and working on skier development in our community. If you have interest in becoming involved in these opportunities or have any questions about how you might be able to help the local ski community, please contact NSCF president Steven Hansen at president@nscfairbanks.org.

FXC Spring Gala on April 28
Celebrate the end of an exciting ski season and the
NSCF community outreach: 2017-18 season highlights

BY LAURI BASSETT
CCAK

In early February, on Super Bowl Sunday, the trails of Kincaid Park were shared by costumed women raising money for the Ski For Women and ConocoPhillips Besh Cup race series skiers vying for spots on Team Alaska. The athletes represented Alaska at US Ski & Snowboard Junior Nationals Championships in Soldier Hollow, Utah, and Arctic Winter Games in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

The final races of the Besh Cup race series are traditionally held in Fairbanks; but thanks to a mid-December meltdown in Anchorage, the host clubs traded weekends. Ski Fest, Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center: A collaborative event hosted by UAF Ski Team and the Nordic Ski Club Fairbanks. This year we had an exciting addition, with REI including their All Out event which included free ski rentals to those interested in trying out the sport. There were several participants that had never been on skis before and the Nanook Ski team members gave free lessons.

Candy Cane Romp at Birch Hill: In this free event, kids were invited to participate in reindeer games, ski with Santa and share some hot cocoa. Youth Winter Carnival at Birch Hill: Multiple non-competitive events, sponsored by ConocoPhillips; This long standing Fairbanks tradition is run by the Fairbanks Cross Country Ski Team (FXC). The young FXC athletes led kids through games and a scavenger hunt.

Birch Hill Candle Light Ski: The community was invited to a mid-winter candle light ski in hopes of seeing many new faces enjoying these beautiful Fairbanks trails and to have those familiar with Birch Hill see it in a different “light.” The turnout was tremendous. Sponsoring Jufrostream Sports.

NSCF Interior Youth Festival at Birch Hill: This year’s festival had a new format. Instead of a one-day event, this year it featured two Wednesday evening spring ski events – the first was a short course 100-meter sprint, and the second featured a fun course of twists, turns, and jumps and slush! Sponsoring by ConocoPhillips.

The ski 50K Challenge: Youth skiers were invited to accumulate 50 kilometers of skiing over the course of the winter. Youth skiers who completed the challenge were awarded midway 25K prizes and medals. This was generously sponsored by Beaver Sports and Ear Nose Throat Clinic of Fairbanks.

A historic season of success for Alaskans racing around the world

BY MIKE DONALDSON

A historic season of success for Alaskans racing around the world

Alaskans shined in the U20 men’s event at Junior Nationals. Skate Mass Hunter Wonders finished first in the skate, with Canyon Tobin second in the relay with LeClair and Alaska Nordic Racing (ANR) athlete Heidi Boomer. The challenges of racing at altitude were combined with racing in 50-degree weather which posed challenges not only for the racers but also for the wax coaches. All racing was done on man-made snow; which was carefully preserved throughout the week of racing; but athletes were happy that Soldier Hollow was able to keep the championships at the venue as planned. Next year Alaskans will enjoy home-state advantage as the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage is set to host Junior Nationals Championships on the trails of Kincaid Park.

Arctic Winter Games is a biennial event of 19 different sports including indoor sports such as curling and table tennis to outdoor sports of alpine and cross-country skiing. The 24 skiers from Team Alaska brought home 17 ulus including a podium finish for each relay team. APUNSC athletes Marit Flora and Rowan Morris topped the podium in each of their individual events.

Gold ulus were also earned by Flora with teammates Katey Houser (ANR) and Maria Nedom (APU); and Morse worked with Travis Kulip (NSCF-FXC) and APUNSC team mate Ethan Eski to take the top of the podium for the 3x3K relays. Once again, the entire Team Alaska took home the Hodgson Trophy which is awarded to the contingent whose athletes best exemplify the ideals of fair play and team spirit. This is the fifth time since 1978 that Alaska has been awarded this prestigious trophy. Congratulations to all of Team Alaska for your efforts, result and sportsmanship!

Cross Country Alaska will close out the season with the annual CCAK Summit on Sunday, April 22, from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. in Anchorage at the ConocoPhillips conference room. The Board of Directors and the Competition Committee convenes to review the season and plan for the upcoming season. If you are interested in attending, please contact Lauri Bassett (info@crosscountryalaska.org) for details.

A A historic season of success for Alaskans racing around the world

BY MIKE DONALDSON

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