BONUS SECTION! Visit anchoragenordicski.com/newsletter for two extra pages of news, photos and volunteer opportunities across Alaska!
Starting the season with parties, patience

Message from NSAA Board and Staff

This year of time, we are reminded of what we are thankful for: time, our Nordic family, snow, balance. While fickle weather patterns have challenged our ski community and it's been a tough start to the season, local skiers and NSAA staff, Operations team, board and volunteers are making the most of whatever comes to them. Like we always do. And we celebrate every chance we get: especially at our recent Ski Swap and Season Kick-Off, both festive and unforgettable get-togethers. See photos in this issue of the Nordic Skiier.

Our experienced NSAA groomers are tempering their enthusiasm with restraint, putting their experience and knowledge to work in these low snow conditions, protecting the community's trails, and our organization's equipment while finding the best ways to make do with what Mother Nature has provided. When the base is thin, pulling up dirt with expensive and fragile equipment is a mistake that could haunt us for the rest of the season and potentially set us all back when the snow does arrive. So they funnel their focus into snowmaking at Kincaid Park, when conditions allow. Equally excited yet patient, trail users are either gliding on patches of snow, stretches of ice, and occasional rocks, or doing snow dances and waiting for the snow to come. It's also the time of year when NSAA's programs come to life! Jumping and Junior Nordic started right after Thanksgiving. Coach positions are filled and thanks to NSAA staff and many hands from our families, gear pickup was the smoothest it's ever been! The buzz from the racing side continues to build. Plans for Besh Cups, AMH Anchorage Cup, Tour of Anchorage, and high school racing are bringing in new volunteers and energy. Jumping has welcomed its new coaches to the community and they've visited local schools to encourage new young jumpers to join them.

Everyone is giddy with excitement for December, which is highlighted by the Solstice Tree Tour on December 16. Don't miss out on your opportunity to check out the trees with your family and friends, or even volunteer to keep this holiday season tradition going strong. NSAA's Board of Directors and staff are especially grateful to welcome two new individuals to the team: Will Earhart and Claire LeClair. They have laid the ground running, plugging into NSAA and strengthening our organization with their skills.

And here's something that arrives later in the season that you can start planning for now: the 2019 Junior Nationals, March 9-15 at Kincaid Park. Junior Nationals come to Anchorage every 10 years, bringing nearly 500 of the nation's top juniors, and countless coaches and parents, to our trails and community. We can't wait. If you can't either, consider joining us as volunteers or make plans to come out and cheer.

AROUND THE BOWL

NSAA Ski Swap packs the bunker

Hundreds passed through the Kincaid Park bunker October 28 looking for deals on skis and outdoor gear at the annual NSAA Ski Swap. The NSAA Ski Bear roamed the crowd outside until the doors opened and passing out high-fives and hugs. Over 80 consigners entered in nearly 2,000 items to the swap, giving the community a range of quality used gear and equipment. Thank you to all our shoppers and consigners!

The 2018-19 season is officially kicked off!

NSAA members and the community celebrated the beginning of the ski season on Sunday, November 4, at the annual NSAA Season Kickoff party. In addition to the usual potluck and presentations, the Winter Activities Expo also featured 21 vendors including AMH, APU Nordic Ski Center, Orange Theory, Rossignol and more! Alaska Olympians Rosie Brennan, Tyler Kornfeld and Scott Patterson were available for autographs and photos. Gold medals with an image of Kikkan Randall on them were sold for a game of Heads or Tails, which was rebranded to Classic or Skate. Brian Kirchner was the lucky winner of an Alaska Airlines ticket after he battled successfully through the game.

Thank you to the dedicated team of volunteers that set up, decorated, greeted, organized and cleaned up at the event. Thank you to Broken Tooth Brewing for the amazing donation of beer for the event. And thank you to the silent auction and door prize donors for the continued support of the NSAA and the trails.

Solstice Tree Tour on Dec. 16

Your business wants to be in on this awesome tradition! NSAA brings you the third annual Solstice Tree Tour: a unique Alaska celebration of Winter Solstice and the return of longer days. Businesses decorate trees on the Mize Loop at Kincaid Park and during this special onetime only event, NSAA permits people to walk as well as ski on the groomed trails. Mark December 16 on your calendar then contact Sara Miller to buy a tree because they’re filling up fast! Sara Miller: aksaramiller@gmail.com or visit the NSAA website: anchoragecondisc.com/solstice-tree-tour for more information.

AMH Anchorage Cup action returns

It’s time for another fun season on the AMH Anchorage Cup circuit! It’ll be the same great series focused on fun and community with a few new faces and twists. Here’s the lowdown on some of this season’s changes:

We’re sad to see Pla’s Classic retiring, but we have a great new sponsor and are excited for to introduce the Moose’s Tooth Classic. Same great chance to stride and glide with 3K, 5K, 15K, and 25K classic options and we’ll still celebrate with everyone’s favorite pizza.

Anchorage Junior Nordic will co-host the sprint relay and ski-cross. This will be a great opportunity for families to get involved and get on course, and to show off those new NSAA Junior Nordic jackets.

To make planning a little easier, we’ve worked hard to get course maps up in advance and will introduce a set race day schedule: long course at noon, middle course at 12:30 p.m., and short courses at 12:45 and 12:45 p.m. See AROUND THE BOWL, Page 3
NSAA Partner Spotlight: Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking (AMH)

The active and awesome crew at AMH pride themselves on being local, and this is especially true when it comes to supporting the Nordic skiing community.

Many know AMH as the title sponsor of NSAA’s citizens’ race series, the AMH Anchorage Cup. Competitors and NSAA volunteers think of AMH when it comes to great, and generous, event door prizes and giveaways. The crew loves those.

But Nordic skiers and AMH have deeper connections that are just as valuable. AMH participates in the annual NSAA Ski Swap, educating and directing beginners to proper gear. Staff from AMH – Emily and Otto – are involved in the NSAA Season Kick Off, celebrating the beginning of winter with members. And there’s no greater advocate for Nordic trails and NSAA support than AMH, whose team encourages trail support, sells NSAA calendars, offers wax discounts to our Junior Nordic program, provides gift card awards to NSAA annual photo contest and hosts ski team nights for the schools.

The list goes on and on. Jason and Adam Loomis (one of Team AK’s newest coaches) Of course, they did not bring a ski jump into each gym – to the disappointment of some students and great relief of others. However, each class had the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of a ski jump: inrun, takeoff, flight and landing. Addition-
NSAA Volunteer Spotlight: Karl Garber

NSAA Operations: All signs point to better adventures

Proud to Support NSAA and Anchorage skiers!

Accurate Vision Center

The hoarding marmot

Quality Goods. Affordable Prices. NEW & USED!
Alaska Ski for Women: Fabulous fun on skis for 23 years

BY JENNY DI GRAPPA
Director, Alaska Ski for Women

Grab a friend, neighbor, co-worker or family member for the 23rd annual Alaska Ski for Women, taking place on Sunday, February 3, 2019, at Kincaid Park. Better yet, put a team together and compete for best team costume and/or most money raised by a single team.

Last year’s prizes included chocolate and Kaladi Brothers coffee cards! This Alaska Ski for Women event includes competitive and non-competitive races on a moderate 4K course around Kincaid Park, including a skate/freestyle, classic, and 8K duathlon race. The last race of the afternoon is the “party wave,” which is immediately preceded by the ever-popular Mardi Gras of the North costume contest. Prizes are awarded to the best team, best duo, and best youth group.

Other opportunities of the day include a free kick wax station, treats from your favorite local retailers, 50+ item silent auction, massage therapists, and more! Register online now and check out our new merchandise: Minimum $35 donation for adults and $15 donation for youth; $50 donation includes this year’s signature ASFW headband. All proceeds and donations go to our grant program for charitable organizations in Alaska working to stop the cycle of domestic violence. Visit alaskaskiforwomen.org to register or learn more.

Art imitates life on the Tour of Anchorage trail

The 31st annual Tour of Anchorage arrives on March 3, but registration and momentum is already gaining steam. One major milestone was reached recently when the 2019 TOA art was unveiled: it was more awesome artwork from talented local artist and skier Becca Rorabaugh.

Her watercolor depicts a skier crossing a bridge and will be used for 2019 TOA posters, merchandise and finishers’ zipper pull. Becca described her inspiration for this year’s TOA art: “It’s one of the low bridges over Campbell Creek on the coldest part of the trail. I was thinking about how beautiful sunlight through fog can be on a clear morning at zero degrees. A 50K race is like a long story with a few outstanding moments of clarity, and I can imagine this place being one of those moments.”

Becca is from Fairbanks and currently skis as a member of the APU Nordic Ski Club’s Elite Team. She was also the featured artist for the 2018 TOA.

31ST TOUR OF ANCHORAGE
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019
Registration ongoing — anchoragealaska.com/tour-of-anchorage (early registration rates apply until Jan. 13)
Bib Pickup — 3-7 p.m. March 1 and 10 a.m.-noon March 2 at APU Moseley Center
Event start times — 50K freestyle at Service HS, 9:30 a.m.; 40K freestyle at Service HS, 10:30 a.m.; 25K classic at APU, 11 a.m.; 25K freestyle at APU, noon.
New for 2019 — Fat Tire Bike Race (details to be announced soon)
Awards Ceremony — Tuesday, March 5, at 49th State Brewing (details TBA)
Registration and more information — anchoragealaska.com/tour-of-anchorage or tourofanchorage@gmail.com.

Food for the Entire Team!

For over 9 years, South Anchorage residents have been coming to locally owned and operated Firetap Alehouse and Restaurant for its signature pretzel sandwiches, gourmet pizzas, hearty salads and a great selection of appetizers. Firetap Alehouse has 36 different beers to choose from, the majority made in Alaska, and you can even get them to go at the growler bar in the liquor store. There is something on the menu for everyone on the team and plenty of space to accommodate large groups.

Firetap Alehouse is a strong supporter of our community athletics including Nordic Skiing, Soccer, Wrestling, Basketball, and Baseball. Firetap also supports numerous charities and participates in school-business partnerships with many South Anchorage schools.

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NSAA is always thrilled to celebrate and thank its special members. This season, NSAA is spotlighting a handful of those supporters with short stories in the Nordic Skier. December’s NSAA Members of the Month are the Waldrop Kornmesser family – Valerie Waldrop and husband Marc Kornmesser and their sons Wyatt and Milo Kornmesser. Valerie recently chatted with NSAA about her family’s connection to the organization and the fun they have skiing around Anchorage.

Years you’ve been Nordic skiing?
Marc and I have been downhill and backcountry skiing since college, but we were introduced to Nordic skiing while living in Michigan about 20 years ago. Our boys started on toddler Nordic skis when they were each about two years old. This is the same age that they discovered their love for M&Ms as we lured them back and forth on the Hillside Gasline Trail with treats!

How many years has your family been involved with NSAA?
We became members our first winter living in Anchorage in 2005. We moved here for the winter recreation and were thrilled to discover the Nordic trail system close to our home. Our kids starting attending the yearly Ski 4 Kids when they were 3 and 5 years old. In addition, over the years we have made additional donations to Ski 4 Kids.

What do you love about Nordic skiing?
I love that I’m able to be on skis, in the woods, exercising, and still get to the grocery store and pick up the kids on time! It’s right here in town, so I appreciate that aspect of it. Also, I’m still so bad at it all after these years, so there’s plenty to work on in my technique. I also like how it’s low impact. My joints like Nordic skiing.

We appreciate your generous support of NSAA! Why do you choose to donate to NSAA?
We donate because we use the trail system and many of the program offerings. I feel that we must donate because we use NSAA all winter. We also donate because we want others to enjoy Nordic skiing and NSAA helps our entire community get out on skis.

What does NSAA’s mission mean to you?
The mission of maintaining trails year-round and promoting a healthy lifestyle through Nordic skiing means a lot to me. My family uses the trails year-round. We bike, hike, run, and ski on them. I’m super thankful for NSAA and it’s a pleasure to support the organization.

Do you have some standout moments from skiing, connecting with NSAA and/or participating in programs or events that you would like to share?
The Tour of Anchorage is always a great event. I’ve raced the 50K skate many times and it’s always a big accomplishment to do and feel good doing it. Marc has raced it many times as well. Two years ago our boys raced the 25K and we partnered up parent and kid. It was such a sunny day. Perfect snow! Tummy treats at the aid stations. The event is such a wonderful way to end the formal ski season – like the end of Junior Nordic, ASD Middle School skiing, and APUNSC Master’s training. And the start of crust skiing and spring skiing in the backcountry.

Anything else?
Thanks for all you do!

NSAA Volunteer Opportunities

The Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage is always looking for volunteers for trails, events and programs. No experience necessary, there’s a role for everyone! This organization is volunteer driven and a little help goes a long way.

Alaska Ski for Women is looking for an assistant race hostess: Are you a natural host? This volunteer position is all about hosting skiers, making sure they have a great experience on the trail and that everyone gets through the course safely and with smiles on their faces. All skills and duties will be learned with the help of the current Race Director and the famous NSAA Green Grunts. Race participation experience is helpful but not required. This is a great event full of wonderful women and girls who love to ski and especially ski in costume.

Please email volunteer@anchoragenordicski.com if you are interested in this fun experience! NSAA would love to have the new hostess on board by January 7 to learn the tricks of the trade.

NSAA Hospitality Crews: Would you like to help NSAA show appreciation for the race volunteers? NSAA is looking for crews to share responsibilities of cooking and baking some of their favorite comfort foods and treats to deliver to NSAA races. Select the dates that work for you at www.anchoragenordicski.com/stay-connected-volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Lauri Bassett at volunteer@anchoragenordicski.com.

Anchorage Cup & Besh Cup Races volunteers needed: NSAA holds the first Anchorage Cup on Sunday, December 9, and the first weekend of ConocoPhillips Besh Cup races on Saturday, December 15 and Sunday, December 16. Volunteers are needed to help in the timing building, on the race course, at the finish line food table and at bib pickup. You will find the Besh Cup race sign up schedule at www.anchoragenordicski.com/stay-connected-volunteer.

Other volunteer opportunities include:
Hillside Trees – Snowmaking at Kincaid Park
Various dates — snowmaking at Kincaid Park
A couple of hours makes a big difference! If you’re interested in helping, please contact he NSAA Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@anchoragenordicski.com or visit www.anchoragenordicski.com/stay-connected-volunteer.

Ski 4 Kids helps Municipality of Anchorage Ski Outreach Program reach students

BY DARCY DUGAN

As winter sets in, memorable experiences on skis are awaiting elementary school students across the Anchorage School District. Thanks to a program run by the Municipality of Anchorage and partially funded by Ski 4 Kids proceeds, around 500 students will participate in a ski outreach program across the Anchorage School District. Thanks for all you do!
CERNSC ski tours

Back by popular demand, CERNSC is sponsoring ski tours around Chugiak/Eagle River this season. If you are interested in joining us, please email Ros Singleton at rosalyxsingleton2@gmail.com or call 907-229-1989 to get on the Ski Tour list.

Requirements: You must be a CERNSC member. If you’re not a member, you can register online at our new website, www.cernsc.org, and pay a nominal fee to support the club’s many activities! You should be an experienced skier and have touring or classical skis. You can bring dogs if they are well-behaved, stay with you, and don’t fight with other dogs.

Here are suggested dates and times for this season’s tours. The venues are dependent on conditions and group preference. We’ll finalize the venue the week before the event.

12:45 p.m. Sunday, December 23 — Eagle River (meet at Briggs Bridge)
12:45 p.m. Sunday, January 20 — Eklutna Lake or Peters Creek
12:45 p.m. Sunday, March 10 — South Fork to Symphony Lake

Eagle River skiers enjoyed a ski tour on frozen Eagle River last December.

CERNSC announces a new and improved website

Check out our club’s sweet new website: cernsc.org. Thanks to Ryan Caldwell for scoping out a great new online registration package which makes registering for Eagle River Junior Nordic and renewing your membership in Eagle River Nordic Ski Club quick and easy. Go online today and renew your membership and check out our great trails and our programs. Also, get information and register for Eagle River Junior Nordic. And you can link to the Alaska Nordic Racing website to sign up for Eagle River Masters.

Message from Eagle River Junior Nordic Coordinators

We had our Ski Wrap on November 10 and it was a great success! Thanks to all those who participated and helped us get ready for the season. We still have openings for Jr. Nordic, so get online and register for some family fun! We have a new website this year, so make sure you head to cernsc.org. As always, we are looking for coaches to help lead this eager group of kiddos. We provide training for all coaches and there is a nice little discount for those who volunteer to be a head coach. As always, think snow, and we will see you on the trails!

— Rish Harty and Ryan Caldwell

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Photographic memories

The best of Alaska's Nordic skiing adventures captured in the 2018 NSAA Photography Contest

Last winter, Jeremy Hinshaw was lucky enough to score perfect skiing conditions; he was also savvy enough to capture the stunning view with a photo.

This fall, Hinshaw and his photo won over the online voters in the 2018 Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage Photography Contest, who named Hinshaws' shot Best of Show. Hinshaw’s winning shot was among over 100 entries in the 2018 edition of the annual competition.

Top photos were showcased at the recent NSAA Season Kickoff.

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

NSAA also thanks the members who went online to vote for their favorite photos, as well as contest coordinator Amber Adams for her efforts behind the scenes, NSAA office staff Erin Beam and Sara Kamahole for their assistance in proofing and editing, and Justin Ritter of CRW Engineering Group, LLC for his graphic design and technical assistance.

NSAA selected contest photographs for its 2018-19 calendar, which is on sale now. Calendars are $13 at the NSAA office, AMH, Skinny Raven, Kaladi Brothers Coffee shops, Title Wave Books, The Hoarding Marmot and The Bake Shop in Girdwood. Calendars also available online at www.anchoragenordicski.com/merchandise or admin@anchoragenordicski.com.

2018 NSAA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Grand Prize — Jeremy Hinshaw, Skiing Back to Rabbit Lake.


Fun Ski Events 1st — Ski Train, By Elizabeth Knapp

Rec Casual Skiing 1st — Multiuse with Lola By Jeremy Hinshaw

Kids on Skis 3rd — Learning to Kick and Glide By Tyler Dann

Fun Ski Events 3rd — Sun Bathing By Elizabeth Knapp

Want to see more amazing photos? Visit anchoragenordicski.com/newsletter/ and go to the Nordic Skier bonus section’s PAGE 18!
**Girdwood Nordic Ski Club**

**Girdwood, Alaska**

**Board of Directors**
- Deb Essex: President
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**A Round Girdwood**

**Solstice and holiday celebrations coming to the trails soon**

For those of you curious about Winter Solstice, here is a reminder of this cause for celebration among our ancestors in Scandinavia. Their Midwinter Feast lasted at least 12 days. During the festivities they burned a giant sun-wheel, which was put on fire and rolled down a hill to entice the sun to return. (According to one theory, this is the origin of the Christmas wreath). The translation of Solstice is “sun stands still.” Well, we aren’t going to send a burning wheel down the Nordic trail, but we are going to light the trails, ski down them, and have a bonfire!

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**S T A T E W I D E**

**Coaching clinics coming soon to Anchorage**

Attention potential Team Alaska coaches and coaches of clubs, Junior Nordic, middle schools, Skiku and NANA Nordic! Cross Country Alaska (CCAK) is offering two coaching clinics – December 14 and 15 – in Anchorage. Eliska Albrigtsen of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Nordic ski team and Greta Anderson of the Alaska Winter Stars will lead the sessions, which are targeted at coaches wishing to gain more experience in coaching junior skiers.

Albrigtsen is a U.S. Ski & Snowboard Level 200 coach who recently joined the UAF coaching staff and is an experienced head coach and junior development coach with Central Cross Country (CXC) division. She is also a four-time All-American skier for the University of Colorado Boulder and an NCAA champion in 2011. Most recently Anderson returned to Alaska after coaching at the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club Elite Team; prior to that she was the head devo coach at APUNSC. Anderson was a member of the APUNSC Elite team from 2009-2013.

Coaches will demonstrate exercises to practice technique elements in a fun environment covering dry-land and on-snow training for both freestyle and classic techniques. Interested participants may register online with CCAK (www.crosscountryalaska.org). Registration fee of $25 will be taken at the clinic (either cash, check, or credit card).

Interested in U.S. Ski & Snowboard Level 100 Certification? Coaches who attend one of these sessions will have the opportunity to become certified as a U.S. Ski & Snowboard Level 100 coach. To do this, prior to attending the clinic, register as a coach with U.S. Ski & Snowboard and complete the online requirements. Upon completing one of the sessions in December, coaches will receive certification as a Level 100 U.S. Ski & Snowboard coach. To register with U.S. Ski & Snowboard, go to https://my.ussa.org/aip/nordic/certification-and-testing. The CCAK portion of the clinic is free for coaches meeting the U.S. Ski & Snowboard requirements to become Level 100 Certified, but pre-registration with CCAK is required.

Clinic dates and times: Friday, December 14: 3:30-7:30 p.m. at Kincaid Park; Saturday, December 15: 12:30-4:30 p.m. at Kincaid Park. Email questions to CCAK at info@crosscountryalaska.org

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**Besh Cup races begin**

A reminder that the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup races kick-off at Kincaid Park on December 15 and 16. Online registration closes at midnight on December 12. Race day registration is available the morning of each race. Please visit www.crosscountryalaska.org for more details as well as information on the January and February races. If you are interested in volunteering for the races (even out of town spectators!) please contact the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage at program@anchorgordinaski.com.

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**Cooper to represent Alaska, U.S. on Biathlon World Cup**

Travis Cooper of Kenai was recently named to the U.S. Biathlon Men’s World Cup Team for the 2018-19 race season. Cooper, 22, is a 2015 graduate of Kenai Central High School, and made the U.S. squad after placing well in a series of roller-ski biathlon races in Soldier Hollow, Utah in November.

It has been awhile since Alaska has sent biathletes to the World Cup race series. Alaskans Jeremy Teela, Jay Hakkinnen, Zachary Hall and Rachel Steer all competed on the Biathlon World Cup circuit in the past. No Alaskan biathletes have represented the U.S. at the last two Winter Olympic Games.

Cooper trained with Alaska Nordic Racing while in Alaska and now trains with the National Guard Biathlon Team in Jericho, Vermont. Biathlon sport is widely popular in Europe and is the only Winter Olympics sport the USA has not received a medal. For additional information on Cooper or biathlon in Alaska, contact the Alaska Biathlon Association at alaskabiathlonassociation@gmail.com.

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** Competitive skiing season kicks off with coaching and racing opportunities**

**BY LAURI BASSETT**

CCAK

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**Kenai’s Travis Cooper in roller-skiing action this summer.**

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**Happy holidays and happy skiing everyone!**
Kachemak Nordic Ski Club
Homer, Alaska

A click away from excellent skiing

Message from KNSC President Mike Gracz

As many of you realize by now, the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club has entered the world of real-time tracking of ski conditions. The club has installed real-time GPS tracking devices on three of its ATV grooming machines and trailcams at two of its trail systems. The GPS devices automatically report their positions to a map on a website as long as the machine is turned on, and they are close to a mapped trail. The website is appropriately named: SkiTrails.info, which also serves up conditions at the major Nordic ski centers across North America. For a KNSC-specific map navigate to: SkiTrails.info/reports/kachemak.

The reporting is color coded by time since grooming, so at-a-glance you can see how recently any of our trails have been groomed. For the red-green colorblind, a report also lists the date of the latest grooming for each trail. You can also click on the “email me” button to receive reports by email as the trails are groomed.

Feedback has been very positive. The GPS trackers can store location information when they lose a signal, and then transmit it when the signal is reestablished. The devices were relatively easy to install, mainly because our generous volunteer electrician, Bruce Hess of Pfuffin Electric performed the work. When you see Bruce on the trails, be sure to thank him! Many of our volunteer groomers also have an app on their iPhones so that they can record grooming when they are not on an ATV with a tracker. When one of these tech-savvy volunteers touches up a trail with a snow-machine, their grooming is recorded. Stan Parrington at McNeil has been especially active using his iPhone to track grooming, and he grooms a ton: be sure to thank him! The trailcams are installed on the maintenance sheds at Lookout and McNeil, where AC power is available. The cameras take a picture every hour during daylight and post to the KNSC website (http://kachemaknordicskiclub.org/). This year, restarting the Lookout camera required a vacuum cleaner and black tape to stick a broken sim card out of its slot! Thank you for the encouraging and fun assistance they provided to save the camera!

As I write this in mid-November, I have just returned from my first on-snow ski day this season, at sunny Hatcher Pass. Hopefully by the time you read this, the groomers will have recorded their first tracks at Ski-Trails.info, and the cameras will show my tracks on the freshly groomed local trails! Ski you out there!

Cynthia and Taru for the encouraging

AROUND THE BAY

A ski clinic for you

Want to improve your Nordic skiing? Check out the two-day clinic for beginner or intermediate skate or classic skiers to be held at the Lookout Mountain Ski Area on Saturday and Sunday, December 15-16, from noon-3:30 pm. Learn new tips from KNSC instructors and enjoy the camaraderie of skiing with others.

Registration is $50, payable by check or cash the day of the clinic. The cameras will show your tracks on the freshly groomed local trails! Ski you out there!

A click away from excellent skiing
The information contained in this article was collected for decades by Homer's ski community, and compiled by longtime local ski advocate Dave Brann.

Can you imagine cross-country skiing by cobbling boards into rough skis, then struggling over bumpy trails through the woods that you stomp out yourself?

That's how pioneers in Kachemak Bay area skied over 100 years ago.

The early Russian explorers on the Kenai probably skied to get around in winter. After the U.S. purchased Alaska from the Russians in 1867, U.S. citizens and immigrants began moving north. They also found that one of the easiest ways to get around in winter – without roads and cars – was by skis they had made themselves or old hand-me-downs someone else had made.

Around 1910, Sedelia at the mouth of Kachemak Bay facing Cook Inlet, had become a major fishing and shipping port. Over 300 people lived there. Tales abound of early residents who were expert skiers and used skis all winter for trapping and hunting.

The written history of skiing in Kachemak Bay starts around this time.

In 1906, a Finnish developer from New York sent Finnish explorers to Kachemak Bay in hopes of founding a colony. The colony never happened but some of the Finns stayed. For hunting and trapping in winter, they used skis to get through the gnarly woods and steep mountains bordering the bay.

By the 1920s, homesteaders were coming to the Kenai Peninsula to pursue agriculture. And they started keeping records and telling stories of their skiing escapades, such as:

- Pa Svedlund, head of one homesteading family, used a 9-foot pair of ash skis that he had made.
- Karl Nielsen sometimes skied from Homer to Seward and back just for a dance.
- Once, two young men decided to go dancing in Ninilchik. They skied from the head of the Kachemak Bay, cross-country to Ninilchik, where they danced, ate, and enjoyed the camaraderie. Then they put their skis back on and headed back to the head of the bay.

Without roads, in winter local residents skied to each other's houses for potluck dinners, parties, and games – including skiing.

The skiing tales grew.

- In 1946-1947, a homesteading couple who lived near Ohlson Mountain said their closest neighbor would ski over to their place every time he was going to town to see what they needed.
- Hunters used skis. On one trip, each hunter had an 80-pound pack, bindings straped to shoe packs, and skis made from sticks to which cans had been nailed upside down on the bottom to serve as poles baskets. It snowed 8 feet while they camped. The hunters waited a day, and it snowed 2 more feet. It took 3 days of continuous skiing for them to get back to Homer.
- And then there are the kid skiers.

By the 1940s, more families lived in the Homer area. Small, local schools popped up that were close to local residents … if you could ski to get to school.

A teacher at the Homer Heights School that opened in January 1940, noted that after the first week of school, “There are ten little pupils, one so tiny that I can’t believe she is more than three years old. All came on skis down those precipitous slopes, across miles of wild country. … It is quite a site to see the children arrive. Skiing as graceful as skating. The front yard of the school is stuck full of skis and ski poles, like a garden of huge needles.”

It took some kids awhile to get to school. At one school, three students needed an hour to ski to school. Two other kids needed 2.5 hours because of the distance and had trails.

Then there is Skippy Tweeden. As told by a later teacher, “Skippy was in the second grade. He skied all the way from Diamond Ridge where Rucksack Street is, down the hill, across the creek, and up to the hill all by himself. There was only one car he passed when people could see if he went by. Other than that if something had happened to him, I don’t know if anyone could ever have found him.”

Homer Ski Club

From the 1950s through early 1960s, the Homer community supported cross-country and alpine skiing. The Homer Ski Club organized in 1948-1949 with 19 members. The club operated a rope tow, moved three times until it landed at its current location on Ohlson Mountain.

Local teachers taught alpine and cross-country skiing at the elementary and high school levels. The local skiers competed with teams from around the state and hosted meets in Homer.

At the elementary school, up to 80 youngsters would show up to ski on Fridays, the designated day for skiing.

Having grown up on skis, at the high school level the students started getting attention in alpine and Nordic events. In the 1960s, Homer's high school team won three state titles competing against Anchorage schools. High school skiers got named to the Junior National teams again and again, and even the U.S. Olympic Ski Team. In 1966, the Alaska Boy's Relay Team won the Junior National Cross-country Championship – a first for Alaska. The team included Larry Martin of Homer.

The Homer skiers were fast but not fancy. At the first big race that they attended in Anchorage, the skiers had no uniforms. Dressed in everyday clothes, they used old hickory and ash cross-country skis that had been cut down. For ski boots, they attached tennis shoes to the skis with screws.

At first glance, the Homer skiers brought snickers from other competitors. As the races finished, however, no one was laughing: the Homer kids took most of the first places in the different categories … nine out of 12 trophies in cross-country, downhill, and slalom races.

Skiing in Homer wasn't always easy. Some years, there was a total lack of skiable snow in the area. One year, without any snow, the team had a frustrating season. Out of six scheduled meets, all but one was cancelled. Anchorage cancelled its entire competitive program, so the (Homer) team made two trips to Fairbanks.

By 1983, the high school team finished a state meet with boys taking 9th and girls taking 3rd. Homer sent five skiers to the Junior Olympics and three to the Arctic Winter Games.

Around 1980, the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club (KNSC) was founded with 50 people meeting at Land's End.

Today, the KNSC has grown to nearly 300 members, grooms more than 75 kilometers of trails full of incredible snow and beauty, and hosts winter events that benefit all ages.

And Kachemak Bay skiers of all ages still participate in many of the ski events that originated in the early days of Homer skiing, such as:

- Youth of all ages participate in winter ski meets around the Peninsula and around the state.
- Kinderski lessons (now the Junior Nordic) offered in February and March. Today's Junior Nordic can bring out 100 youngsters for Saturday ski lessons.
- • The fabled Wine and Cheese Tour draws a fun-loving crowd every February.
- Fast Nordic skiers statewide head to Homer in March for the Sea to Ski Triathlon.
- And Homer still turns out the ski champions. The skiing students are sometimes second- and third-generation Homer skiers. They win or place high in races around the state, are sent to Junior National, Junior Olympics, and U.S. Olympic Nordic teams. They also ski as part of college teams.
- And many of these lifelong skiers return to Homer. As part of the KNSC, they help groom trails, volunteer for ski events, and teach the next generation how to ski.

So much has changed in Homer in the past 100 years. Sure, our skis and trails have improved. But the snow and scenery in Kachemak Bay are often the same as early pioneer skiers enjoyed.

And sometimes in the backcountry, when you're skiing in the sunshine on a groomed trail and no one is around, you can almost hear the laughter of Skippy Tweeden, the little 8-year-old, as he races over ridges to school on a pair of old beat-up skis.
DOUBLE THE STORIES FOR THE ICICLE DOUBLE

BY JEFF KASE

What are you doing after Christmas and before New Year’s? MSSC is hosting the Icicle Double Nordic ski event on Dec. 29-30. Both days will have 30K, 15K, and 5K distances for skiers (distances subject to change). Saturday will be the classic technique; Sunday will be the ski technique.

Last year was a great success! Thanks to the MSSC, local government and businesses, and Mother Nature, we incorporated new competition trails into the race. Race day had clear skies with views of Pioneer and Matanuska Peak, and temperatures in the low 20s. The 5K event covered the intermediate Matanuska and Susitna loops. The 30K event was 4x7.5K laps that challenged skiers on the Denali, Matanuska and Susitna loops.

Spirts where high at the awards ceremony in the warm chalet. “Woodal” awards were presented to those who race both days and placed in the top three. Thanks to our sponsors there were so many prizes, some people got two! The greatest honor the Icicle Double bestows is the parade of pint glasses. If skiers complete both days of 30K skiing, they get an Icicle Double pint glass. Cash prizes were awarded to the top three overall 30K finishers. Skiers from the Mat-Su Valley, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Talkeetna, Eagle River, Truckee, Calif., MSSC, AWS, APU, FXC DNSC, NSCF, Auburn Ski Club provided a diverse lineup.

Register for the Icicle Double at www.matsuski.org. The Icicle Double is a family, recreational, and citizen racer ski event that’s affordable for those who register early. You can easily register the entire family ($5 for any combination of both days of skiing for just $50 (plus fees). Late registration starts December 15; the price increases to $60/day for a family. Race day registration is $60/person. A $10/day coupon is available to high school skiers.

The Icicle Double is well-timed: after holiday eating, before New Year’s celebration. Train enough this year?

I did it for the pint glass! And the views! And the fun! BY LORENE LYNN

It was the pint glass. I’m not sure why the prospect of getting a pint glass was enough motivation for me to ski 60K in two days, but it was. The Icicle Double is again calling with the prospect of getting another pint glass. To get this coveted prize, skiers need to complete the 30K classic ski on day one and 30K skate ski on day two.

As a recreational skier, my goal is to finish and to allow the volunteer timers to go home at some point. The volunteers are an encouraging group, telling me, “You’re doing great! Don’t worry about how long it takes!” I was OK getting lapped by a handful of Olympic-level skiers, but it was a little humiliating to be passed by one of those skier’s husbands who was pulling a sled with two bundled babies inside. But I kept on skiing. And the small group of spectators and the race volunteers kept cheering me on, putting a smile on my face.

The course is challenging, but beautiful. Much of the fun in this ski is seeing so many friendly faces (or in my case, their backs as they pass me) on the course.

Fortunately, there are shorter versions of the course. But that pint glass. The only way to get it to ski the entire 60K. I’m keeping my fingers crossed that I’m up to the task again this year. And hoping more recreational skiers will join me in the fun! I would really appreciate having a few more skiers out there so I don’t feel like it’s just me keeping those poor timers out there for so long!

Find out by doing back-to-back 30Ks. Going to a costume party? Test out reactions by wearing your costume while you ski. Is your New Year’s resolution to ski more? Get an early start this weekend.

The Icicle Double will be at Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA), located an hour from Anchorage. The stadium is at an elevation of about 900 feet, which often receives snow when other lower elevation trail systems may be getting rain. Because the GPRA trails are against the Talkeetna Mountains, we often are spared from the destructive force of the common winds in Palmer and Wasilla. The view of Pioneer Peak from the parking lot is almost worth the drive. There may be 30 people or 130 at the start line. One thing for sure: is that the crowd will include multi-generational families with kids in back packs, kids on hand-me-down skis, adolescent high schoolers, caring parents, and grumpy grandparents. Solo recreational skiers, college team members, dedicated master skiers, and elite professional racers make up the front of the pack. Do you have what it takes to finish the course? Or make a podium?

The Icicle Double is MSSC’s premier event and allows you to do lots of skiing during winter’s darkest days. Whether going to Hatcher Pass or GPRA, the Valley often provides the best early season skiing. Bring the family or wax with HF, either way you will be in good company. We are very proud of our growing trail system and want to share it with you. Thank you to the wonderlful community support in the form of prizes, money, and participation. “It’s a great day to be a skier!”

Mat-Su Ski Club

by ed strabel

The crew of dedicated volunteer groomers have a simple mission and vision, provide the Nordic skiing community with well groomed ski trails within the lower Mat-Su Valley whenever we have skiable snow (normally from mid-October to late May). Our vision is to always provide at least one Nordic Skiing venue for the public to safely use during the entire ski season.

Last ski season we hit the jackpot with a ski season that stretched from October 16 to May 30. A total of 226 skiing days! This is the longest Nordic ski season in North America. Sorry Mount Bachelor, we’re a few days longer than your ski season.

Our volunteer groomers use a variety of different pieces of grooming equipment to produce enjoyable Nordic trails. In the fall of the season we pre-position a 110-inch wide Ginzu Groomer with two track pans at Independence Mine along with our Centaur tracked vehicle (a poor man’s version of a Pisten Bully). This equipment normally stays up there until late December or until we have a good snow pack at the GPRA when the equipment is then moved to GPRA. In most years, skiable snow works its way down from higher altitude to the low lands and we follow up with grooming Archangel Road with a Super Wide Track snow machine pulling an 84-inch Ginzu Groomer with a single-track pan. We try to groom Archangel Rd. all season long. This is our “go to place” if we have a melt down in the low lands.

The club’s home turf is the Government Peak Recreation Area with almost 20 kilometers of ski trails from beginner to world-class. We are the ALASKA nordic skier
A ROUND THE INTERIOR

Junior Nordics offered for homeschoolers

If you haven’t already heard, Junior Nordics has a weekly Wednesday session that’s held at 1 p.m. and is geared toward homeschool students. If you are interested in joining, you can contact Sally Enendestad or Jennifer Williamson, Fairbanks Junior Nordics directors, at juniornordics@nscfairbanks.org or (907) 371-9564.

NSCF seeking Adult Lessons instructors

Want to share your love of skiing with people new to the sport? Help them gain confidence and skills? Share in-depth techniques and training strategies? The NSCF Adult Lessons program is looking for instructors and substitute instructors.

Instructors need to be NSCF members and undergo a background check. Instructors get paid $45 per hour for group lessons and are covered by club insurance for those lessons. Instructors need to be First Aid and CPR certified. (The club will provide an opportunity to gain these certifications.) The club also provides instructor training alongside the Jr. Nordics program instructors.

For more information and to sign up as an instructor, please contact Andie Levesque at adultlessons@nscfairbanks.org.

NSCF seeking Junior Nordics coaches

Our young skiers are in need of your help! We have lots of exciting, budding Nordic skiers ready to enjoy this amazing snow and not enough volunteer coaches to go around. You do not need experience, just a positive attitude and love of skiing. If you are interested, please contact Sally Enendestad or Jennifer Williamson (juniornordics@nscfairbanks.org; (907) 371-9564). Junior Nordics lessons take place Mondays at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at UAF West Ridge, Tuesday/Thursday at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Birch Hill and Sunday at 2-3 p.m. at Birch Hill. There is also a new daytime program at 1-5 p.m. at Birch Hill Ski Center intended for homeschool children.

Help NSCF by shopping

Help the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks simply by shopping at Fred Meyer or Amazon. If you have a Fred Meyer Rewards Card you can link it to NSCF through the store’s Community Rewards program. Fred Meyer makes donations to participating non-profits based on the spending of the customers linked to each non-profit. Amazon donates a portion of the profits through its AmazonSmile program. Find out more about each program at nscfairbanks.org/support-nscf > Affiliate Programs.

Trail info from your phone

Use your smartphone’s browser and go to the NSCF website. For weather: in the menu (top right corner) choose Weather. Scroll down to Mobile Weather. Click on that link. (iOS users can get the Birch Hill App from the App store.) For grooming: in the menu (top right corner) choose Trails. Then scroll down a bit and you’ll get the latest grooming updates. Scroll down farther to get to the grooming chart. Turn your phone sideways for easier reading.

NSCF Calendar

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

- December 9 — Distance Series Race #1
- December 19 — Wednesday Night Race
- December 26 — Ski Your Age in Kilometers

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 several volunteer opportunities. If you want to volunteer or have questions see nscfairbanks.org/support-nscf > Volunteer or contact NSCF president Steven Hansen at president@nscfairbanks.org.

Friends of FXC Help NSCF

Want to help young people be happy, healthy adults through skiing? Consider joining Friends of FXC. FXC (Fairbanks Cross Country), the club’s junior race-training program, helps more than 100 young athletes ages 10 to 20 learn important life skills through cross-country skiing. The focus is on racing but they gain so many more skills. These are lifelong skills including goal setting, confidence building, how to show up on time with the correct gear, how to keep track of their time, and how to live healthy lives. They learn to understand and appreciate what can be accomplished with dedication and long-term focus.

FXC athletes also represent the club in races across the state and nation. They take that representation seriously and have done us proud, competing hard and behaving responsibly. The more we can support them, the easier it is for them to concentrate on doing the best they can.

To make FXC available to a wide variety of families, tuition rates are kept as low as possible. However, this means tuition covers only a part of the cost of the program. The rest comes from fundraising. Friends of FXC is a large part of that effort. Almost the entire proceeds of Friends of FXC go directly to program support. If you would like to become a member of Friends of FXC, please contact Lisa Druckenmiller (friendsoffxc@gmail.com; 479-3545).
Celebrate holidays and happy skiing at Ski Your Age in Kilometers!

BY ERIC TROYER

Plan to ski off some of those holiday calories on Wednesday, December 26, at the Wentz Orthodontics Ski Your Age in Kilometers! The 15th edition of this annual event will be held at Birch Hill Recreation Area, on the day after Christmas Day. This year’s event is being sponsored by title sponsor Wentz Orthodontics and major sponsor Edward Jones Investments/Christopher Knott.

Skier Your Age is a good excuse to go cross-country skiing, visit with other great people, and burn off some of those calories you’ve been stowing away. The event runs officially from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. It has no entry fee, though donations are accepted and organizers ask that people bring potluck food. Registration and food will be in the borough’s spacious Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center. The emphasis of the event is on fun, socializing and good exercise. Despite its name, people can ski whatever distance they please. Some super-athletes will be out there hammering the trails, trying to crank out the most kilometers regardless of their age, while other participants will ski just a portion of their age before heading inside to eat and socialize. It’s all good!

Typically, kids as young as 1 or 2 join the fun along with those into their 70s or beyond. And since food and signsups are all located in the Birch Hill Cross Country Center, all participants have a chance to socialize no matter their level of intensity or expertise. If you would like to participate, please bring food to share. Popular items include soups, stews and chili in crockpots, since they are a great way to warm up after an invigorating ski. Sweets are also popular, especially with those crazy geezer-jocks over 50 who ski their age or nearly die trying.

Don’t forget to register when you arrive. Accomplishments on many levels are recognized. While the Wentz Orthodontics Ski Your Age in Kilometers has no entry fee, it is a fundraiser that benefits Fairbanks Cross-Country, the junior race program of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. People will be able to make donations with cash, check or credit card. Forms for Friends of FXC, the program booster club, will be available. Membership forms for the NSCF will also be available.

Also, members of NSCF-FXC will be raising funds by gathering pledges for the amount of kilometers they ski. That’s another way to support the program. If you want to help pledge contact an NSCF-FXC member or coach Alasdair Tutt (fxc@nscfairbanks.org). For questions or to volunteer at the event, please contact Lynne and Branden Petersen (907-388-3216).

Edward Jones
INVESTMENTS
Christopher Knott, AAMS
458-7700

Whether it’s SKI or Apres ski, you’re welcome here.

When in Fairbanks, keep to your routine and stay in comfort. At Wedgewood Resort, enjoy condo-style one-, two- and three-bedroom suites with fully-equipped kitchens. All suites are surrounded by a 75-acre wildlife reserve with nature trails for cross-country skiing, next to the groomed trails at Creamer’s Field and only 3 miles from Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center.

Welcome to your home away from home.

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Wedgewood Resort
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FountainheadHotels.com/wedgewood-resort

Proud supporter of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks.
Enjoying happy trails and the freedom of skiing: Shelly Soderstrom

We try to regularly feature Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks members on these pages. So many of them deserve lots of kudos for helping out the club and doing other things to keep people skiing in Interior Alaska. This is one way we can thank them.

It’s also a good way to find out more about people who share your love of skiing. This month we feature Shelly Soderstrom, a longtime Junior Nordics volunteer coach and race volunteer.

How are you involved with the NSCF?

I have been a coach for the Junior Nordics program going on 19 years this year. I used to do three days a week, but I have taken it down to two days a week last season. My daughter Olivia started skiing when she was four years old and then started racing. That’s when I started volunteering for any races I could in Fairbanks. Birch Hill Recreation Area has become my second home in the winter.

How long have you been a cross-country skier?

What do you remember about first learning to ski?

I grew up north of Trapper Creek off the Parks Highway. We had no road to the house, so I started skiing at four years old. I remember watching by brothers learn how to ski and wanting to ski so badly I tried skiing on a set of 2x4s. My brother Clyde won a set of skis at school – old blue fishscaleas with the three-pin bindings – and brought them home for me. I was so excited. I didn’t have any poles so I went out to the woodpile where my dad milled wood and grabbed a couple of spruce bows and I was set. Mom and dad found me a set of poles shortly after. When I started going to school I would ski to the bus stop. It would become a challenge, because there were these big four-legged creatures that loved the willows on the side of the nice hard-packed trail. So, sometimes I had to let Dad take me to the bus stop on the snow machine, which was loud enough to chase them away.

What do you like about cross-country skiing?

Cross-country was my way to freedom in my childhood. I grew up where we had hundreds of miles of trails, and I was able to go anytime, as long as I had my chores done. When I was a little older my dad gave me a dog out of the dog team that I was able to train for skijoring. His name was Hercules. From when I was 12, he and I went winter camping and on long trips at the base of the Alaska Range. These were my favorite memories of skiing. I also raced in high school, on the Susitna Valley High School team and at Besh Cup races. I loved racing. Now I teach kids to love the sport. I also taught my husband how to ski and he coaches with me. Skiing is a perfect sport to teach the kids individual goals. To push themselves to be better at something, and teach them that the only one who can make them better is themselves. At the end of the season, it is amazing to see how far they come. Some push themselves to skate ski, some get into the tightest tuck they can to scream down the hill. It’s a lot of fun!

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

My family runs Happy Trails Farm in the summer. Winter is when the Happy Trails part comes into the name. We groom 3-5 kilometers of private ski trails around our property. It is so relaxing to go for a ski and come back home for a hot cup of coffee by the fire. My second favorite would have to be Birch Hill. They do an amazing job keeping those trails in tip-top shape!

What other activities do you enjoy besides skiing?

I enjoy working on our farm in the summer, and getting away for hiking and camping trips in any spare time. I also like to play hockey. I played on the Fairbanks women’s league for a number of years.

When and why did you move to Fairbanks?

What do you like about living in Fairbanks?

I moved to Fairbanks in 2002 from Taileteena. I traveled to New Zealand the first year out of high school. When I came back I was broke and in desperate need of a full-time, dependable job, which seems kind of a weird thing to say for a 19-year-old. I came to Fairbanks and started working at Play It Again Sports. The owners took me in like one of their own. I fell in love with the skiing up here, and the summers are amazing.

Is there anything more you want to tell us about yourself?

On the side I also give private ski lessons and try to do them on our private ski trails. My husband Donnie works hard keeping the trails nice so we use them as much as possible. … I have two daughters – Olivia, 11, and Kelsey, 15 – who also love to ski and they like to race. We are also introducing both of the girls into biathlon this year. I am anxious to see both of their achievements this year on the snow.

GROOMERS

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working on obtaining FIS certification on the new competition trails that offer courses from short sprints up to 5K and feature climbs that will take the starch out of even the strongest skier’s underwear! Our groomers use several machines including the Centaur, tracked ATVs, and snowmachines concurrently to groom these 30-foot wide trails along with our recreational trails within the trail system.

The club also grooms a spider web of relatively flat trails in the Mat Valley Moose Range from both the Wendent Rd. trailhead and the Murphy Rd. trailhead and Buffalo Mine Rd. Trailhead. Our volunteers use lightweight, long, narrow “homemade” drags made by board member Gene Backus that smooth out the uneven, snow-covered trail. Because the area is designated as “multi use,” they make frequent

the ALASKA nordic skier

PHOTO COURTESY WHILDFRIENDSHIPS

Shelly Soderstrom celebrates her daughter Olivia’s win at the first Kinross Fort Knox Town Series race last year at Birch Hill Recreation Area.

PHOTO COURTESY WHILDFRIENDSHIPS

Mat-Su Ski Club groomers, from left, Zack Steer, Chris Jones, Gil Carr, Ed Strabel, Ashley Wise, Jeff Kase and Mark Strabel, sharp turns to discourage snowmachiniers from using the trails. The ski club has two Super Wide Track Snowmachines for this grooming, but several of our volunteer groomers use their own personal snowmachines with these lightweight groomers. These trails are pet friendly and also are used by fat tire bikers.

Three things that skiers can do to improve everyone’s skiing enjoyment are:

• Clean up after your dog.
• Toss sticks and branches off the trail.
• Please give the snow time to “set up” after the trail is freshly groomed. Almost all of our grooming is done at night for safety reasons (avoid flat light and skier conflicts), and to give the snow time to set up before the skiers come out in the daytime.

This season’s volunteers include: Jeff Kase, Zach Steer, Gene Backus, Jerry Hupp, Mark Strabel, Ashley Wise, Shane Barber, Chris Jones, Gil Carr, Karen Hopp, Billie Hann (and her dad) and Ed Strabel. We are always looking for conscientious individuals to train as groomers. The time commitment is normally three to six hours, late evenings. We do one-on-one training with trainee groomers until they are fully trained.

If interested in becoming a groomer, call Ed at 354-7524. Happy trails to you!
Birch Hill grooming relies on your support

BY ERIC TROYER

People can ski for free at Birch Hill Recreation Area, but taking care of the trails isn’t free. The trails rely on your generosity.

The NSCF grooms the trails at Birch Hill, not the Fairbanks Borough. All trail grooming is paid for by the NSCF, and our grooming program relies mostly on donations. Our grooming crew is one of the best in the nation, but they need our help. When you sign up for NSCF membership, please remember to make a donation to the Trail Fund.

If you have already signed up and forgot to make a donation, it’s not too late. Go to nsclfairbanks.org and click on “Support NSCF” dropdown menu. You can also feed the Iron Ranger, the large iron pole at the base of the stairs that lead to the stadium. Just put in cash or checks. If you pay with a check, make it out to “NSCF—Fairbanks Trail Fund.”

And thank you! Without your support we couldn’t groom the trails at Birch Hill.

Below are donation amounts suggested by the NSCF Board of Directors. These donations are based on trails program operating costs. These amounts are on the low side of fees typically paid at ski areas in the Lower 48, especially when you consider our ski season is usually weeks or months longer.

Individual Season Pass/Youth (14 and under) — $90
Individual Season Pass/Junior-Student (high school or college student) — $150
Individual Season Pass/Adult — $200
Couples Season Pass/Adult — $300
Family Season Pass (includes children through high school) — $400
Sustaining donor levels— Tracksetter $500; Trailblazer $1,000

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Do you get black toenails? Do your heels slip in your shoes, creating blisters? Do you ever wonder why there is an extra set of holes on the shoe upper? Sometimes it is not the shoe, it is the way you are lacing it. There are different ways that you can lace your running shoes to make them more comfortable or to help customize the fit.

Here are general tips on running shoe lacing technique to address several issues:

1. **Heel slipping**
   - Loop lacing lock; cross-lace the shoe from the toe box until second to last top hole and lace up each side of the eye row. Thread the loose lace ends through the opposite lace loop. Tie the shoe at the top, as usual.

2. **High arches**
   - This will give your foot more room in the midfoot and help keep the shoe from feeling too tight across the arch. Cross-lace from the toe box, then skip a row across the arch, finish as usual.

3. **Wide forefoot**
   - This will give your toes more room to spread or allow your toes to splay while running. Skip a row on the toe box, then cross-lace as usual.

4. **Narrow feet**
   - This will help your shoe fit more securely in the places that it’s needed by adding a loop lacing lock in the middle of the row. Continue cross-lacing the shoe to the top and tie as usual.

5. **Toe problems**
   - This allows the material above your big toe to be pulled up and off the nail when the outside lace is tugged and tied tightly. Start by threading one end of the shoelace through the eyelet at the top of the shoe on the opposite side of your big toe. Leave enough lace length to tie the shoe. Lace through the eyelet close to your big toe, creating a diagonal pattern. Then lace straight across toward the outside of the shoe then diagonally up an eyelet. Tie your shoes as usual.

6. **Feet swelling, or shoe feels too tight.**
   - This will give your feet overall roomier feel. Use this parallel lacing technique; lace from the toe box, skipping an eyelet and lace into the eyelet directly across from it.

Reposted from KatieRUNShis
Meet NSAA’s Newest Lifetime Membership Award recipient: Matt Pauli

Recognizing individuals with the Lifetime Membership award is a long-standing tradition within NSAA. This prestigious group of individuals and families dates back to the early 1970s with names like Tobben and Tania Sparkland, Barney Seiler and Louie and Jean Strutz.

This year, Matt Pauli was presented the award for the countless hours and commitment to NSAA and Alaska’s Nordic skiing community. Matt’s role within NSAA varies widely. In the racing world, he’s an FIS Technical Delegate, representing Alaska at many national and world competitions. Behind the scenes, Matt has been a regular groomsman with the NSAA Operations Team for over 10 years and continues to supplement the staff when he can. He also recently provided valuable expertise with safety plans in Operations. Giving up much of his evenings for NSAA to ensure quality and safety trails for Anchorage’s skiers has become second nature for him.

Many don’t know, but Matt is also an idea guy. As a longtime NSAA member, he started the recurring gifting option four years ago. “You should have an option for members to give monthly,” he said. “I’d give more each year if the amounts were broken down.”

Congrats, Matt, for being this year’s Lifetime Membership Award recipient and thanks for all you do for NSAA and Alaska’s skiers!
More from the 2018 NSAA Photography Contest

More
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NSAA upcoming events

DECEMBER
Saturday, December 1 — ASD High School Freestyle Snowball Race — Hillside
Sunday, December 2 — Biathlon Race #1
Friday, December 7 — ASD High School Lynx Loppet — Kincaid
Saturday, December 8 — ASD High School Lynx Loppet — Kincaid
Saturday, December 8 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Iditarod Trail NHK Turnagain Pass, Kenai Mountains
Sunday, December 9 — AMH Anchorage Cup — AMH Freestyle

Saturday, December 15 — Besh Cup #1 — Kincaid
Sunday, December 16 — Besh Cup #2 — Kincaid
Sunday, December 16 — Solstice Tree Tour
Thursday, December 20 — Biathlon Race #2
TBA — Annual Speedskate/Skate Ski Duathlon
TBA — Mat Su Icicle Double
TBA — UAA Friends and Family Relay

JANUARY
Friday, January 4 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Friday Night Fun Ski
Saturday, January 5 — Biathlon Race #3
Sunday, January 6 — Biathlon Race #4
Friday, January 11 — NSAA Backcountry Tours: Friday Night Fun Ski - Hillside Ski Trail

Saturday, January 12 — Junior Nordic Equipment Return for 1st Session and Pickup for 2nd Session
Saturday, January 12 — ASD High School Chugach Stampede — Chugach
Sunday, January 13 — AMH Anchorage Cup — Hickok Duathlon
Monday, January 14 — Junior Nordic Session #2 Starts
Wednesday, January 16 — ASD High School Bartlett Relay — Bartlett
Saturday, January 19 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Sheep Mountain, two overnights, Talkeetna Mountains
Saturday, January 19 — Besh Cup #3 — Soldotna
Sunday, January 20 — Besh Cup #4 — Soldotna
Monday, January 21 — Matanuska Glacier from Caribou Creek (MLK Holiday)
Tuesday, January 22 — ASD Middle School Race — Kincaid
Wednesday, January 23 — Biathlon Race #5
Saturday, January 26 — ASD High School Skiatlon — Kincaid
Sunday, January 27 — NSAA Backcountry Tour: Beach Lake Ski Trails
Sunday, January 27 — AMH Anchorage Cup — AMH Classic
Wednesday, January 30 — ASD Middle School Race — Mirror Lake
TBA — Triluke Winter Triathlon

For more events and details, visit the NSAA calendar at www.anchoragenordicski.com/calendar.