February 2019, Vol.20, No.5

ANCHORAGE:
Meet the man who’s skied all the Tours

EAGLE RIVER:
Ski the Beach, Remember a friend

FAIRBANKS:
Up for the Winter Trails Challenge?
Message from the NSAA Board and Staff: The great season keeps getting better
February is shaping up to be an incredible month of skiing across Alaska and especially here in South-central. The natural snow arrived, beginner skiers are excited, experienced skiers are getting in their KS, and great racing has followed.

High school and middle school skiing is underway with enthusiasm. NSAA programs are flourishing with Ski Jumping numbers climbing and Junior Nordic bursting at the seams with 70 more kids than last year. The program is down to its last few rental skis and jackets. This is a good problem to have! New coaches are helping meet the demand so kids on waitlists can join, too; over 30 spots were added the first week! We haven’t seen this kind of energy, demand for youth lessons, and numbers of young skiers and their parents, in years! Thank you to everyone who makes NSAA’s programs strong.

Adding to the enthusiasm, a fat bike component has been added to our historic Tour of Anchorage, which broadens the awareness of NSAA even more. No experience necessary, there’s a little bit of everything, and a potential to make this a short or long trip, depending on the group. The trails are rolling through the beautiful forested area, Bring your warm and wet clothes. Check the weather forecast before heading out. Optional après ski food and grig at a nearby restaurant if there is interest from the group.

February 9 – Middle Fork Loop, Chugach Mountains
Level: Moderate I; Distance: 8 miles; Elevation Gain: ~700; Tour Leader: Mary Vavrik, 907-306-7686; mvavrik@glg.net
Ski with spectacular views of Rusty Point, Parnell Mountain, and great views of the surrounding mountains. This is one of Anchorage’s most accessible backcountry tours. We meet up at the trailhead; 9:30 a.m. and start touring to the south of the trailhead. If weather and snow conditions are favorable we’ll ski the Middle Fork Loop. Otherwise, if we have high winds or icy trail conditions, we’ll ski the many of the nearby hibside trails in the trees. Expect to return to your vehicles about 3:30 or 4 p.m. You’ll need to purchase an Alaska State Parks Day Use Pass for $5 if you don’t currently have one. Be prepared for cold, wind, and good times. You’ll need warm clothes including some for breaks; food for a lunch stop and plenty of water. The trail climbs from the start and while there are some relatively flat portions, be prepared for skiing uphill and navigating some downhills. Much of the trail is wide snowmachine groomed trail, but a lot of it will be skier made trails packed with some snow and traffic. The first third of the trail will be characterized by uphill, the middle third will be relatively flat, and the last portion will be downhill.

February 16-18— Mount Marathon Mt/Telee and Touring options, two overnight weekends at Mount Marathon, you’ll need skis for the ski. You should also have avalanche gear (beacon, probe and shovel) for the Telee or portion of the trail. If you’d like to ski and glide instead, there are a couple of touring options to beautiful Summit Lake or rolling hills to the north on old mining trails (no ski required). There is potential to make this a short or long trip, depending on the group. The trails are rolling through the beautiful forested area. Bring your warm and wet clothes. Check the weather forecast before heading out. Optional après ski food and grig at a nearby restaurant if there is interest from the group.

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Nancy and Caleb Spence were ready to tag team the Hickok Duathlon.
the après-ski soup provided by race co-host, APU Nordic Ski Team.
• AMH Anchorage Cup Races, Feb. 1-10 and Feb. 17
• AMH, the awesome title sponsor, co-host, APU Nordic Ski Team.
• 2 Day weekend at Manitoba Huts for telemarking, skiing or touring.

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Board Meetings

February Thursday of the month, 6:15 P.M. at AP Energy Center or NSAA office. Open to all.

FOOTBALL

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Ski Jumping

Karen Compton and Vivienne Murray

Ski Train

Travis Taylor

Solstice Tree Tour Sara Miller

Special Events and Racing

Lauri Bossert

Tour of Anchorage Matias Saari

NSAA Office Hours

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday
Thanks to all who make the Alaska Ski for Women so special … and fun!

The 33rd annual Alaska Ski for Women starts at 9 a.m. Sunday, February 3, at Kincaid Park. The Duathlon will start at 10:30 a.m., an 8K (4.8 mile) course, timed. The skate race is 4K in length (2.4 miles), timed and will start at 10:35 a.m. The classic race will also be 4K, timed and will start at 11 a.m.

The Mardis Gras of the North costume contest will take place from 11:30 a.m. -noon, with prizes awarded to the best duo, best team, and best youth or youth group. Finally, the party wave will start at 12:15 p.m. and is 4K in length. The party wave is an untimed ski, especially fun for the first-time skier! Prizes will be awarded to the top three skiers in each of the timed events.

Online registration is open through midnight January 30 at www.alaskaskiforwomen.org. In-person registration and bib pick-up will take place from noon-7 p.m. Friday, February 1, at the new REI location. For anyone who misses these deadlines, race-day registration (party wave only) takes place from 9-11:45 a.m. and ends just before the party wave begins.

Weather or not, NSAA Ski Jumpers are always prepared for takeoff

BY ADAM LOOMIS
COACH, NSAA JUMPING PROGRAM

We have been lucky so far this winter, with above-average snowfall and below-average temperatures compared to the last handful of seasons. Although big snowstorms mean more hill work, and the ski jumps can be awfully cold, we embrace those moments of hard winter. Nonetheless, it only takes a few days of Pineapple Express onslaugth to change the snow in a hurry.

Our two biggest jumps – the 40-meter and 65-meter – are particularly vulnerable to rapid melting, as the inrun ramps stick high up into the sky and take the brunt of the warm winds. These tropical winds can melt the snow off the scaffolding in no time.

Fortunately, our jumps are equipped to handle meltdowns like the New Year’s warmup. We have steel tracks on the inruns, which keep the steel tracks clear by shoveling, sweeping and even propane torching away any snow and ice that might throw the jumpers off balance.

The jumpers appreciate that these steel trackers are straight and smooth. Although a nicely cut snow track is hard to beat, we’re happy to have this option to keep the jumpers going throughout the season.

The steel tracks are just one component of the facility at the Karl Eid Ski Jumps, which are some of the best jumping hills in the nation. Few people are lucky enough to have a ski jump in their hometown. If you’re a local to Anchorage, consider yourself fortunate, and come check out the action – or better yet, try it out! Learn more at anchoragenordicski.com/ski-jumping/.

The steel surface of the 40-meter track glimmers.

The steel tracks on the inrun and have the jumpers land on the snow landing hill.

This is not only a fun event, but a fundraising event: A minimum donation of $35 for registration ($15 for youth under 12) or $50 for registration which gets you an entry plus the signature Ski for Women headband.

The Alaska Ski for Women would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of the 2019 event: Platinum Sponsor Connie Phillips; Gold Sponsor KTUU; Silver Sponsors Anchorage Women’s Clinic, The Alaska Club, Great Harvest Bread Co. and Premier Alaska Tours (which provides transportation from Kincaid Elementary to the stadium!).

See you Super Bowl Sunday at Kincaid Park!

NSAA Scholarships support college dreams, athletic aspirations

It’s time for high school and college skiers to take advantage of one more benefit of being an NSAA member – the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) College Scholarship program. NSAA annually awards multiple scholarships of up to $1,500 in recognition of the achievements of college-bound high school seniors and college students for their scholastic performance, participation in high school and college cross-country skiing, and contributions to their community.

To be eligible, students must be Alaska residents, NSAA members for the past two ski seasons, and members of their high school or college ski team. The scholarship may be used for any educationally related expenses at any accredited college or university.

The application period will open from February 1 to March 31 for the 2018-2019 academic year. Applications are accepted online only through the Alaska Community Foundation website www.alaskacf.org/blog/scholarships/nordic-ski-association-of-anchorage-scholarship/. Qualifications, selection criteria and additional details will be posted on this page. Visit the application page on the NSAA website at anchoragenordicski.com/nsaa-scholarships/.

Applying for a scholarship is a great way to finish your ski season. All the hard work is behind you, it’s time to take advantage of one more opportunity – financial recognition for your dedication to cross-country skiing, and contributions to your school, ski team, and community.

Still have questions? Please feel free to call the NSAA Office at 276-7009.

The Alaska Nordic Skier is published monthly in Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Mat-Su, Seward, Soldotna, Kenai, Talkeetna and Valdez. The Alaska Nordic Skier is published October through April by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, Inc.

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On the cover – Collage of nordic skiing related social media posts.
Tour de Talbot: Skier carries on 30-year Tour of Anchorage tradition

BY MATIAS SAARI
Tour of Anchorage Race Director

Many thousands of skiers have participated in the Tour of Anchorage, but only one — Bruce Talbot — has completed every edition since 1988.

“Talbot’s best placing came in 1989, the tour’s second year, when he notched 10th place in the 50K among about 100 competitors in 2 hours, 38 minutes. Talbot, a retired planner with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, became involved even before the first crosstown race as he helped cut part of a new trail in the Campbell Tract’s black spruce forest in 1987. He recalls the Tour’s formative years when the course lacked some of the bridges and tunnels that later enabled an unbroken route through Anchorage’s greenbelts for 1,500 or more skiers.

“In those early years there was no green bridge across Tudor Road so volunteers stopped traffic and shoveled snow across the road and onto the sidewalk leading to University Lake,” Talbot said by phone in December from the Big Island of Hawaii.

Another year the wind scoured part of the Coastal Trail down to gravel, sand and pavement. "We had to run around the end of the airport because there was no snow,” he recalled fondly. “I’m a runner so I made some good time there.”

Less enjoyable was the year he raced the Tour with the flu. “I really wanted to race the Tour, but I didn’t want to lose,” said Talbot, adding that Talbot is a “good spirit” but not a serious training.”

“Bruce is very fit. He gets himself in shape for the race prior to the Tour," said Blanchet, among others, completed a 170-mile trek along Bhutan’s northern border with Tibet that included crossing mountain passes up to 18,000 feet in elevation. But he knows where he’ll be the first Sunday in March for the foreseeable future.

“I’m looking forward to competing in many more (TOA)s in the coming years,” he said.

31st Tour of Anchorage
Sunday, March 3, 2019
- Registration ongoing at anchoragenordicski.com/tour-of-anchorage
- Bib Pickup: 3-7 p.m. Friday, March 1, and 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, 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
- Awards Ceremony: Tuesday, March 5, at 49th State Brewing (details TBA)
- Registration and more information: anchoragenordicski.com/tour-of-anchorage or tourofanchorage@gmail.com.

The Women’s Boutique and Clinics

From the first exciting moments you discover you’re pregnant, to the birth of your baby, and through the early months of parenthood, we are here to help you. Offering expert resources, support and hard-to-find items, the Women’s Boutique is conveniently located on the first floor of Providence Alaska Medical Center by the Maternity Center greeter desk.

Products and services include:
- A large size selection of nursing bras, gowns and tank tops
- Bra fit specialists on staff
- Breastfeeding supplies including Medela and Ameda pumps and accessories, nipple cream, herbs, hands-free pumping bras and breastfeeding pillows
- Maternity and postpartum support belts
- Baby slings, wraps and carriers
- Carrier consultations
- Baby items including blankets, swaddlers and booties
- Gift certificates

The Women’s Boutique is happy to ship items to locations outside Anchorage.

Hours
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Closed on holidays/holiday weekends

Call 907-212-5886 for more information.

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DAVID PAHLKE
PHOTO BY
Ski Train 2019: Superheroes, villains and ice cream?

Mark your calendars for March 23 and this year’s NSAA Ski Train to Curry. Don’t get left at the depot – there are less than 100 tickets left! Volunteers are busy planning and working through details with the Alaska Railroad, sponsors and NSAA staff to ensure this is the best day ever! Considered an annual tradition, the Ski Train has been the winter’s focal point for Alaskan friends and families for over 40 years. Proceeds go back to Anchorage trails, support the year-round work done by NSAA to keep our community active! Many railcars are near capacity, so buy tickets soon for the experience of a lifetime.

Ski Train sponsors continue to give the day new energy and car themes including rock stars, comic book villains, superheroes, Star Trek, Hawaiian, animal kingdom and Mardi Gras. Gear drop off on Friday, March 22, makes for an easier haul on Saturday morning. Close access to the train depot is available with 2 VIP parking passes; only 2 left for sale! Different car atmospheres and kid pricing make Ski Train fun and affordable for all ages. Seven train cars total, seven different themes, thanks to our very cool sponsors: REI, Trek Store of Anchorage, Wild Scoops, Conrad Houston Insurance, Matanuska Brewing, Kaldia, Glacier Brewhouse and Alaska Brewing. New this year: Railgate Garden passes in Curry for $15 each complete with music, hot food, BBQ and beverages.

An 45-year tradition for Alaskans, Ski Train is a day of celebration of winter coming to a close, of longer, warmer days of sunlight and outdoor Alaskan life. Join the fun and get tickets today at anchoragenordicski.com/events/ski-train/

Top 10 reasons to attend Ski 4 Kids on February 23, 2019!

1. Dance with costumed animals, including a moose and a bear, and maybe even a tiger. We promise that all animals will be fun and friendly.
2. Try out a sit ski. It’s harder than it looks. You’ll be amazed at how much upper body strength is required. Thanks to Ira Edwards for his help with this station.
3. Sneak lemon drops at the biathlon station. Did we say that?! You’ll be adults. They’ve been preparing their playlist for months and are ready for a PARTY!
4. Leap off jumps and perform tricks on the obstacle ski course.
5. Show off your skiing skills on the ski courses. There are courses for everyone, ranging from 1 km to 3 km, timed and untimed. Down the hill, use the hill, zoom, zoom, zoom!
6. Scoop down cookies, hot chocolate, and maybe some cookies after completing the ski course. Great Harvest Bread Company and Kaladi Brothers Coffee will generously provide refreshments to all finishers. We’ll have coffee for the adults, too. A grill station is in the works, courtesy of Trax Outdoor Center 2.0.
7. Listen to really goofy announcers and fun music. Trust us, these announcers are professional goofballs. Sometimes they even pretend to be adults. They’ve been preparing their playlist for months and are ready for a PARTY!
8. Try a kid-sized fat-tire bike. Speedway Cycles will have bikes for all ages to try. These bikes are fun and affordable for all.
9. Get oriented! Try a fun orienteering course with the Arctic Orienteering Club.
10. Try out snowshoeing. It’s a great way to float over deep snow.

Make tracks to TRAX on your way to Kincaid!

TRAX Outdoor Center 2.0, Anchorage’s newest Nordic ski shop, is situated perfectly on your way to Kincaid Park in the Tastee Freez mall. We rent skate skis and classic skis from race to touring styles. We wax with same-day service, and yes, we do kick wax. TRAX Outdoor Center is the No. 1 dealer for the most exciting ski brand in the world: Salomon! You can demo any gear, any time, because sometimes you have to see it and ski it to believe it. :)
NSAA Volunteer of the Month: Tim Stone

BY SARA KAMAHLE

When I started asking around about Tim Stone, the compliments and adorations came flooding in by the pages. His impact on the Nordic skiing community is evident, as is his passion for racing and his dedication to quality.

Paul Stone remembers his dad volunteering at his high school ski races in the early '90s. Paul recalls a story when he lived in Maine and was a race director for a local high school. Tim arrived when volunteers were ready to cancel the championships due to warm conditions. Paul says, “The two of us convinced them we could make it work. The temperatures dropped again but a few sections were washed out and ponds and pools had formed. Relaying on his experience pumping water out of the stadium at Kincaid for Junior nationals and the National Masters events in Anchorage we dug channels to drain the snow and rented a pump for the lowest spot. 36 hours of trenching/pumping later the Nordic Heritage Sport Club for the lowest spot. 36 hours of trenching/pumping later the Nordic Heritage Sport Club for the lowest spot.

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I love about Nordic skiing?

GAIL HOEFLER: Brian grew up in Alaska and has skied all his life including for West High School in the 70s. I grew up in Massachusetts, met Brian in New York, and we moved to Alaska in 1991. Our kids participated in Junior Nordic and I’ve been actively volunteering for most of my time here.

DO YOU HAVE SOME STANDOUT MOMENTS FROM SKIING, Connector

BY LAURA WRIGHT

NSAA Member Spotlight: The Hoefler Family

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. February’s NSAA Members of the Month are the husband-wife skiing and NSAA supporting duo of Gail and Brian Hoefler, along with their three active children. They’ve been NSAA members and donors since the mid-1990s and regularly on Anchorage’s trails even longer.

Gail recently checked in with NSAA to talk about her family’s connection to NSAA as skiers and volunteers and some of the fun they’ve had on skis around Alaska.

NSAA: How many years have you been Nordic skiing?

GAIL HOEFLER: Amongst his fellow Green Grunts. Diane Moxness, former NSAA Executive Director and longtime volunteer says, “He’s all about racing. I can’t recall a race happening that he wasn’t there. He’s no longer the NSAA Race Director but he’s still out there: driving the snow machine, setting up the race, taking it down, directing fence set up, dropping the start flag, announcing at millions of high school races, making sure the radios are charged and working and giving unsolicited but invaluable advice.”

Lin Hinderman, volunteer and ski enthusiast, also comments on Tim’s love for racing: “I met Tim Stone when I was still coaching at Dimond. He was a fixture at all of the high school races. He was always there for course set up, but his most public face at that time was the race announcer. He was the first person to have a pre-race music mix. Although some of his selections would make the kids groan.”

What everyone seems to know about Tim Stone is that he will be at every race and requires coffee and doughnuts. Lin says, “His sense of loyalty to the club (NSAA) is strong and his goal is to make sure races are run well and that skiers have a good time.” Everyone commented on his expertise and his witty sense of humor.

Tim is a rock in our Nordic skiing community and we at the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage want to thank him for every race he’s attended and every radio that he’s kept track of. Thank you, Tim!

NSAA Volunteer of the Month: Tim Stone

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NSAA Volunteer of the Month: Tim Stone
Eagle River Nordic Ski Club
Eagle River, Alaska

Take a tour of our backyards and back valleys with CERNSC

Come ski with us! Back by popular demand, CERNSC is sponsoring ski tours around Chugiak/Eagle River. We had a great turnout for our first ski tour up Homestead trail from Briggs Bridge to South Park. If you are interested in joining us, please e-mail Ros Singleton at ros@l单身ton2@gmail.com or call 907-229-1890 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 upcoming tours. The venues are dependent on conditions and group preference. We'll finalize the venue the week before the event.

Sunday, February 17: 12:45 p.m. — Peters Creek
Steve and Barb Johnson (could be Feb 16); see tour summary below

Sunday, March 10: 12:45 p.m. — South Fork to Symphony Lake (maybe another in April)

Peters Creek tour summary
Skiing up Peters Creek Valley can be a short, medium, or long day trip. Metal-edge skis are recommended. The first mile is uphill to the Mt. Eklutna intersection. The trail will split after a short distance. There is signage at this point. Continue straight ahead to 4 Mile Valley for a good day trip. After 1.5 miles, you'll come to an open spot close to 4 Mile Creek. Total distance from trailhead is 2.5 miles. From there, further up the valley, you will probably have to break trail. If you turn right at the signage instead of going straight, ski to 4 Mile Creek (Mile 3). After crossing the creek, the next two miles are hilly in sections. There is a park sign at Mile 5. From here you'll probably be breaking trail for the next 10 miles to Mt. Rumble. Total distance to Mt. Rumble from the trailhead is 15 miles.

Parking at the trailhead is an issue. There is limited space so please carpool if you're in a group. Also, please park as far off the road to allow for local traffic. Access to the trailhead can be found by using Google Maps and searching for Peter's Creek Trailhead. The road access is hilly and a 4-WD vehicle is recommended.

When there is adequate snow cover, Chugach State Park (CSP), will open the valley to snow machines. Call CSP at 245-5014 for openings or go online.

Conditions are best after a snowfall to tour up Peters Creek Valley. If you're looking for a new ski trip in CSP, this valley will surprise you.

Ski the Beach and remember our friend Erin Johnson

The Ski the Beach Race: A Memorial Race for Erin K. Johnson, a Chugiak High School skier, will be held on Sunday, February 24. Last year the race was a huge success with 230 people registering. The Chugiak-Eagle River Nordic Ski Club members said it was the largest Ski the Beach Race that they could remember.

Even though the race was a fun, free community race, all donations were given to the Erin K. Johnson Memorial Fund (erinjohnson.com). We raised nearly $5,000!

The weather was perfect with fresh snow and sunshine. Beach themed costumes added to this fun event. Winners last year came away with a pineapple, unique, handmade wooden medals, and a free beverage card from Jitters. The winners of the kids races also received free ice cream at Coldstone Creamery in Eagle River. Additional prizes were donated by Skinny Raven, Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking, REI, and Barney’s Sports Chalet.

Put this race on your calendar; visit cernsc.org for more.

Ski the Beach 2019: A Memorial Race for Erin K. Johnson
Brought to you by CERNSC

Sunday, February 24, 2019 at Beach Lake Chalet
Community Freestyle Ski Race: 1.3k, 3.1k, 7.6k, & 15.5k
Bib Pickup and Registration: 11-12:30 pm
Race Start: 1 pm

This is a fun family event open to all ages. Race entry fee is by donation, and all proceeds benefit the Erin K. Johnson Memorial Fund.

Come dressed in tropical attire to enjoy your afternoon at the Beach! As always, this race is weather-dependent. Be sure to check the Junior Nordic Facebook page for updates. We look forward to seeing you at the Beach!

For more information, please visit our website: www.cernsc.org

STATEWIDE: Tour Tsalteshi on Feb. 17

Last year, the Tsalteshi Trails hosted the inaugural Tour of Tsalteshi. It consisted of a 20K event, which skied all of our trails one time, and a 40K double tour. We had 80 participants, including a few from Seward. In creating the Tour of Tsalteshi, our primary goal was to help grow and foster the Nordic ski community on the Peninsula. As part of that, we would love to have skiers from across the Peninsula and Alaska be a part of the tour.

The Seward Nordic Ski Club is offering all members the same discount as Tsalteshi Trail Association members. Pre-registration before February, which includes a custom buff and some other goodies, is only $25!

The Tour starts at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 17. That Saturday night, Soldotna has its Frozen River Fest, a craft beer festival with live music next to the Kenai River. So whether it is just coming for the day to ski our beautiful trail system or making it a fun weekend, this is a great opportunity for Seward Nordic skiers and anyone wanting to take on the tour. The website with all the information about the event and registration links is ourotalsalteshi.org.
Nationals success launches AK skiers to world stages

BY CROSS-COUNTRY AK

Alaska cross-country skiers turned in excellent performances at the U.S. Cross Country Championships held in Craftsbury, Vermont, in early January. The results from the championships are used to select teams for international competition as well as identify qualifiers for regional junior teams.

U18 Nordic Nations' Cup Team – Adrianna Proffitt and Michael Earnhart, skiers who train with Alaska Nordic Racing, earned positions on this team to compete in Otepää, Estonia. Proffitt and Earnhart competed in a very talented group of U18 athletes, many of whom earned positions on the World Juniors team. According to Bryan Fish, U.S. Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Sport Development Manager, “This three-event race series is a critical piece of the U.S. development pipeline to prepare athletes for the Junior Worlds by giving them great international race experience. This is a very talented group of young men and women.” Alaska has a long history of skiers making the U18 Nations’ Cup (formerly known as the Scando Cup team, many of whom go on to compete at higher levels. Alaska Nordic Racing coach Rachelle Kanady was the trip leader for this team.

Junior World Championship Team – Familiar faces of Team Alaska once again represented the United States at the Junior World Championships in Lahti, Finland, January 20-27. Alumna of the 2018 Nordic Nations’ Cup team, Fairbanks’ FXC skier Kendall Kramer topped the U18 age group final standings selected the Junior World Championships event. Additionally, her team member from 2018 Nordic Nations’ Cup, Zanden McMurlen of APUNSC, also scored well enough overall to have his choice of a second visit to the Nordic.

America’s, and Alaska’s, top young skiers compete in the 2019 Junior Nationals

U.S Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Junior Championships, March 9-17, 2019, at Kincaid Park

Around 500 of the top young cross-country skiers from across Alaska and America will compete for national titles at the 2019 U.S. Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Championships, which begin Monday, March 11, and continue through Saturday, March 16. All events take place at Kincaid Park.

The week of racing, hosted by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage and premier sponsor ConocoPhillips, will include four races for young men and women. There are three racing divisions for each gender – U20 (Ages 18-19), U18 (Ages 16-17) and U16 (Ages 14-15). The top American finisher in each race division will be crowned national champion.

Junior Nationals come to Alaska in five-year rotations, splitting between Fairbanks and Anchorage; they last took place in Fairbanks in 2013 and last took place in Anchorage in 2008. More than 100 coaches, countless parents and family members, and more than 200 volunteers will fuel the event.

Events schedule: All races at Kincaid Park; schedule subject to change
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday, March 11 – Men’s and Women’s classic sprints
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday, March 15 – Men’s and Women’s mass start classic.
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, March 16 – Men’s and Women’s relay freestyle
Find a full schedule — race days and off-days – at juniornationalsxc2019.com/event-info/. Event course maps are available at juniornationalsxc2019.com/course-maps/.
Learn more at juniornationalsxc2019.com and facebook.com/xcusjrnats2019.


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.
February 2019

It’s ski season and Girdwood’s got the goods

Well, we ended 2018 with a super fun Celebration of Light. On the Winter Solstice, we hosted a Nordic celebration with a light show, bonfire, food, music, drinks and groomed Nordic loop. If you missed it, put this on your calendar for 2019. Special thanks to Lin Hinderman and her lighting bedazzlement of the 1K loop.

We started 2019 off with a January 1 beautiful dedication. Girdwood community dedicated “Doug’s Bridge” behind the Chapel of our Lady of the Snows. Donna Knutson and family lead the dedication in memory of her late-husband Doug Knutson. Doug was a volunteer for the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Girdwood. After Doug passed in 2014, the Knutsons looked an opportunity to remember Doug with a trail project along Girdwood’s cross-country ski trails. The damaged bridges behind the Chapel needed replacing, and Donna felt the project was a good fit.

Although this bridge is new to Girdwood, the beams had plenty of use within the Municipality of Anchorage. The beams were salvaged from the Sisson bridge on the Coastal Trail. They were cut in half, transported to Girdwood, stored at Alyeska Resort, cut again, and repurposed for Doug’s Bridge. This enormous effort was spearheaded by GNSC board member Brian Burnett, and generously helped out by The Boutet Company, Roger Hickel Contracting Inc, Jim Braham, and Alaska Demolition. This entire project would have stalled if not for Alaska Demolition. Locally, the beams were prepped on Alyeska Resort property, and then helicoptered on-site by Alpine Air Alaska. How else do you move four, 35-foot beams weighing 2,000-plus pounds each over a creek surrounded by wetlands?

This entire project would not have been possible without the generosity of the Knutson family and the Nordic community donations contributed in Doug’s memory. We were very honored to replace the damaged bridges with a new safe creek crossing in his name. We are grateful to Donna Knutson, David Knutson, and all the support securing this project and helping maintain the Girdwood multi-use trail system for generations to come. Now dedicated, the bridges will be called “Doug’s Bridge” and have a bench and signpost installed in the summer. From Sisson to Knutson, thank you to all!

Coming on Saturday, April 20, we will be hosting the annual Alyeska Skimeister. Come celebrate the final ski event in Girdwood with this Alpine-Nordic Bike Race. You can race as an individual or a team! Find more information online at www.skigirdwood.org or email info@skigirdwood.org

And finally, your voice matters! We have been proposing additional multi-use trails in Girdwood for the past two years. As we prepare to present this proposal to the Anchorage Assembly, now is the time for letters of support. These letters not only show community support, but the number of year-round trail users that value maintained trails throughout the Girdwood valley. Girdwood has a rich history of cross-country skiing with the original Nordic trail loop constructed for the 1969 Junior XC Championships. Now, we look towards the future and the opportunity to continue this legacy of year-round recreation on a looped system through the forest. For more information about this project go to skigirdwood.org. Send all letters of support to info@skigirdwood.org.

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

Proud to Support NSAA and Anchorage skiers!

Offering a large menu of salads, appetizers, grilled chicken, sandwiches, gardenhugs, ice cream treats and Pineapple Dale Whip! Featuring beef from Mr Prime Beef and fish from Alaska. For orders to go, visit www.tif2go.com or call 248-3068.

Jewel Lake TASTE·FRESH
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Wear your NSAA Trail pin to Tastee Frew and save 10%!
Around the Bay

Homer Marathon Set for March 9 – One of Alaska’s most awesome Nordic events

Past skiers of the rugged Homer Marathon have compared it to skiing Spencer Loop three times – up one steep slope, down another, up another, and on and on. The 2019 Homer Marathon, slated for March 9, offers something for all skiers: last-clipped 25K and 42K races for the hearty and a scenic 20K tour for skiers who want to enjoy the country.

Most seasons, the marathon begins at the Lookout Mountain Recreation Area and snakes up and down the steep slopes that lie between the ski site and downtown Homer. Last year, the event moved to the McNeil Canyon trails and delighted skiers (maybe because the hills weren’t so high). The snow that falls between now and March 9 determines the site for the marathon.

For details and registration, check out the KNSC website and Facebook page.

Homer Nordic skiers flock to Ski Your Age event

Fueled by food eaten over the holidays, dozens of Homer skiers of all ages braved the cold and snow to participate in the annual Ski Your Age event on Wednesday, December 26, 2018.

Event division finishers included: Recovering: Giving Moral Support: Katie Davis. Ski Your Age in Kilometers: Denner Wadzawa, 46K; Aurora Wadzawa, 25K; Anna Dickinson Williams, 38K; Jacob Davis, 20K; Caleb Rauch, 26K; J. Meeks, 18K; Hannah Illingworth, 16K; Katie Miller, 20K; Ayana Cline 15K; Autumn Daigne, 19K; Kara Schnitt, 27K; Max Schnitt, 25K; Clyde Clemens, 30K; (9 years old) Sykia Clemens, 25K; Reid Rauch, 10K; Family Ski Totals: Clemens Family of 4, 107K; Wadzawa Family of 3, 32K; Schnitt Family of 2, 52K; Vantrese Family of 7, 64K; Bursch Family of 6, 64K; Lautkis Family of 4, 70.5K; Rauch Family, 46K; Renn Family; 83K; Grace/Synter Family of 3, 120K; Davis-Family of 2, 25K; Matt/Wooding Family of 2, 34.25; Century Club (ski 100 minus your age in K): George Matt, 23K; Dick Dickinson, 37K; Mike Graze, 50.6K; Michelle Stenger, 50K; Jane Weble, 50K; Skiers who skied everyone else's age in kilometers or stated for fun (not all kilometers know): Renn Marden, 5K; Katie Marden, 7K; Brad & Molly Marden, 10K; Jeanine Wooding, 11 2K; Elijah Williams, 4K; Kathy Sarns-Irwin, 31K; Michelle Wadzawa, 31K; John Minski, 23K; Lyn Masiow, 16K; Jana Davis, 20K; Maggie Bursch, 15K; Sam Parish Bursch, 15K; Cate Bursch, 10K; Tom Bursch, 7K; Jeremy R Bursch, 14.5K; Frances Bursch, 14.5K; Marylou Burton, 13K; David Clemens, 14K; Kate Clemens, 25K; Huld Biskop, 5K; Martin Schuster, 34K; Heather Renner, 25K; Carin Rauch, 10K; Beth Schott, 35K; Jacks’ Weekly Wkly Kine, 5K; Audrey Russell, 19K; Rachel Leonard, 2K; Sade Gibson, 2K; Lenea Gibson, 2K; Ted Russell, 19K; Dave Kaufmann, 2K; Reid Kaufmann, 2K; Interns Ki skied—John Miles, Kim Sweeny, Charlie Trowbridge, Rebecca Trowbridge, Richard Burton, Frida Renner, Martin Renner, Bryn Field, Lila Dunn.

We still have snow!
Recent thaws haven’t hampered the groomers in

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club
Homer, Alaska

A Kachemak Nordic Ski Club event in Homer, Alaska

KNSC volunteers delight in coaching kids with Skiku

BY JEANNIE WOODRING

Imagine living in a cold climate with snow eight months of the year and thousands of miles of snow-covered land to ski over. You have never had ski.

That is life in winter for most children in rural Alaska. From the Southwest, West, Northwest, Arctic and Interior parts of the state, unconnected to the road system, few rural kids know anything about Nordic skiing.

Skiku is changing all that and skiers from the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club (KNSC) have become passionate volunteer coaches for the organization.

The organization was co-founded eight years ago by Robin Kornfield and Lars Flora. Kornfield grew up in Kiana and has raised her now-grown children in Anchorage. Her family benefitted from the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage’s programs and events.

“I wanted to share a little bit of what we have in Anchorage with rural Alaska,” Kornfield said. “I have this basic belief that moving across the ground on your own power is a great idea.”

To advance this idea, Kornfield worked with Flora and others to “bring passionate skiers from urban Alaska to rural Alaska to teach skiing.” Partnering with school districts, corporate and community programs, and volunteer coaches, Skiku has grown to bring crosscountry skiing to 7,000 rural youngsters each year. Sponsors that cared the most, like Native corporations, health organizations and businesses that serve rural residents, lined up to support Skiku. Other corporate and local sponsors that do business statewide also helped fund the program, from buying skis to transporting coaches.

To date, the program has distributed over 3,500 pairs of skis to rural villages during the spring Nordic ski program. Each year, from late February through mid-April, the volunteer coaches provide a Ski Week, skiing with the students in different villages, bringing in new skis, repairing skis that can be fixed, and bringing unfixable skis back to town.

In 2019, the program will reach over 60 rural communities, from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to the Arctic to the Interior and Alaska towns near the Canada border.

“We are creating a network of people who all share a particular skill to get together and prac
BY JEFF KASE

The Mat-Su Ski Club hosted a two-day ski event over the weekend after Christmas and before New Year’s. Almost 100 people registered for one or both days of the Icicle Double. Day one (Saturday) was conducted in the classic technique and marked by fresh snow overnight followed by large packs of skiers, exciting sprint finishes and a surprise winner. Day two (Sunday) was conducted in the skate technique under perfect weather conditions and spectators were rewarded with lead changes, a family sweep of the podium, celebrity participation, and the greatest Red Lantern finish of all time.

The Icicle Double is the Mat-Su Ski Club’s premier ski event and nearly doubled in size from last year. Part of the reason for the added participation in the Icicle Double is that the Mat-Su Ski Club hosted the FIS Besh Cup Races the week before. The Icicle Double hints at becoming one of the state’s favorite early season ski events/races.

### 2018 Mat Su Icicle Double was double the frosty fun!

In preparation for Saturday’s classic event, the groomers immaculately prepared the 4x7.5K course, and set double tracks best line... then it snowed more than six inches overnight and into the start of the races. These conditions made for slower than normal times and created a situation in the 10K where there was a lead pack of 11 skiers that took turns breaking trail. No breakaways were possible and this lead group enjoyed skiing as a pack at the front of the race. Skiing is often an individual sport, but skiing in a group is way more fun and exciting for the racers and spectators. On the final lap the top contenders injected some speed and intensity to break up the field. High school skier Peter Hinds from APU won the race 1:16 ahead of runner up Kenny Brewer of Anchorage. James Crimp was third. After the race, there was talk about whether this would be enough of a lead for Peter Hinds to win the overall.

In the 15K, Jeremy Kupferschmidt led the 2x7.5K from start to finish. The most exciting finish of the day happened in the 5K and came down to a sprint finish between Aaron Power of AK Winter Stars and Noah Hanes of Hatcher Pass. Spectators were on their feet and cheering as Aaron Power won by 4 seconds. Alison Arians of AK Winter Stars dominated the women’s 30K.

Sunday’s skate race was conducted on the same 7.5K course under partly cloudy skies and moderate temperatures. The 30K saw lead changes and large gaps among the top four, a chase group of four skiers together, and some fresh skiers entered the mix after not competing in day one of the two-day event. Kenny Brewer was able to erase the 1:16 deficit from day one and add another 1:20. Cody Priest of ANR moved up from sixth on day one to finish second in the skate race. Peter Hinds finished third. Olympian Holy Brooks skied with the men to win the women’s 30K while Alison Arians came in second. In the 15K, Kai Taylor of FHS battled to victory with Roan Hall of Clagak and Colorado Mesa University while Jeremy Kupferschmidt got third. In the 5K, Noah Hanes of got third behind a pair of fresh racers from APU.

The greatest honor the Icicle Double bestows is the coveted Icicle Double pint glass. Skiers earn this award for completing both days of 30K skiing. This year, 13 men and six women received this highest of honors! In addition to the pint glass, cash...
NATIONALS  
Continued from Page 8
Nations’ Cup or to join the Junior World Championship team. Gus Schumacher turned in a perfect score in the junior division at the U.S. Cross Country Championships; placing seventh overall (first junior) in the 15K classical individual start event and 12th overall (first junior) in the classic sprint event. On day three, Schumacher competed as one of two juniors in the 30K ski race start event and placed fourth. Luke Jager of APUNC placed fourth overall in the Junior World Championships standings placing in the top 5 of the qualification events including a second-place finish in the 10K mass start junior race. At the 2018 Junior World Championships, Schumacher and Jager were both of the relay team (along with APUNC skier Hunter Wonders) which made history with their second place finish in the 4×5 relay.

U23 Team – APUNC skiers earned four positions on this team: Hunter Wonders, Thomas O’Harra, Hailey Swirbul and Hannah Halvorsen. O’Harra, who has represented the United States on the U18, the Junior World and the U23 teams in the past, declined this year’s spot. O’Harra topped the U23 men’s field in the 30K ski race start event placing 11th overall for his final U.S. Nationals competition as a U23 competitor. Wonders was the second U23, placing 14th overall in that race. Swirbul was the top U23 racer in the 20K mass start race placing 4th overall. Halvorsen competed in the finals on each of the sprint race days landing on the podiums for a silver medal in the ski sprint event and a bronze medal in the classic sprint event. Alaska once again had a familiar face on the coaching staff with Alaska Winter Stars coach, Greta Anderson as the glide wax coach.

As part of the U.S. Ski & Snowboard team criteria for Junior Nationals, skiers who place in the top 20 of the Junior World Championships points list from U.S. National Championships secure positions on Team Alaska. In addition to the international team members from Alaska, the following skiers have pre-qualified for Team Alaska should they choose to attend the event at Kincaid Park in March: Ti Donaldson (Montana State University), Molly Gellert (Dartmouth College), Anja Maijala (UAP), Jenna DiFolco (UAA). CCAK criteria for Team Alaska allows for athletes who place 21-30 in the Junior World Championships points list and Alexander Maurer secured his position on Team Alaska with his results. Finally, athletes who qualify for the Junior World Championship Biathlon team also secured spots on Team Alaska. Helen Wilson, Maxime Germain, and Maja Lapkass represented USA in Osribel, Slovakia.

The final spots for Team Alaska will be filled after the ConocoPhillips Besh Cup races held at Birch Hill in Fairbanks. Information can be found at crosscountryalaska.org. Online registration runs through midnight on Wednesday, January 30.

SKIKU  
Continued from Page 10

tice with kids,” Kornfield says. “The kids have the opportunity to meet people we bring out, and urban people get the chance to learn about rural Alaskans, to know people by name, to learn about infrastructure, and about life in remote villages.”

Every year, KNCS volunteer coaches line up join the program. Caleb Rauch, for example, is only 17 but he’s already taught rural Nordic skiing for five years. He got involved at age 12 when his mom, Carlin Rauch, went to Nuiqut to teach skiing. The next year, Mom took Caleb to Nome. To date, he has taught skiing in Nome several times, Nuiqut, Kotzebue, Pilot Station, and Elim. “Skiing was such a big part of my childhood that I feel responsible to pass it on, and show other generations how to create a healthy, fun lifestyle from the ground up,” he says.

He notes, “I think it’s really easy to lose the memory of pure, childhood joy too quickly. Coaching is my way of remembering that feeling. Whether in a high-speed game of sharks and minnows, tumbling down a hill, or getting stuck in fresh powder, it’s impossible to be around kids and not become one yourself.”

Rauch also says the program “had huge benefits for my leadership skills. My third year coaching, I got placed as the head coach for the Elim trip, which was probably the most responsible I’ve ever faced. “In addition,” he adds, “spending time in these communities with a drastically different culture and way of life has been incredibly eye-opening. Skiku offers me an opportunity to do what I love while benefitting others, and there’s no question it’s been the most valuable experience I’ve ever had.”

Catie Bursch, a volunteer coach for six years, heard about the Skiku from her uncle, Andy Sheefish.

Continued from Page 10

A three-year volunteer coach with Skiku, Stacey Buckalew says, “I soon learned that hard work, enthusiasm, and passion for Nordic ski games with kids is what it [Skiku] is all about.”

“Skiku week is definitely the highlight of the school year for the kids,” she adds. “For many villages, this is the first opportunity for the kids to get outside and play after many winter months of dark and subzero temperatures. When we show up in a village with bundles of skis, the kids know this means fun and we are treated like rock stars.”

Kids soon learn “that ski can take them places around the village under their own power,” Buckalew says. “I’ve seen kids take their skis to the grocery store, over to their Grandma’s house to show off the skis, for home for lunch, and out across the Bering Sea to the local fishing holes to catch sheefish.”

Yes, the kids caught fish on skis. “The real joy is not so much the skiing as the reward I feel for empowering the kids to glide on snow and enjoy the delights of winter;” Buckalew says. “Skiing offers an active and healthy outlook for the kids. For me, it’s also great to share my passion for skiing with youth in remote communities and learning more about the culture and life in remote Alaskan places.”

Christine Anderson, whose children learned to ski in Homer and skied through high school and college, also learned about Skiku from a KNCS member. “I seized on the opportunity to coach children in unique and beautiful places, like Ambler and Kiana on the upper Kobuk,” she says. “They learned from me and I learned from them. We built confidence together, a valuable life skill.”

Other Homer Nordic skiers who have helped coach with Skiku are: Claire Neaton, Cole Talbot, Delan and Christine Anderson, Denver Right, Forest and Stephanie Greer, and Jennifer Robinette.

Perhaps the best reason to volunteer to coach Nordic skiing is summarized by Caleb Rauch. “I’ve never seen anyone smile wider than kindergarteners going on their first ski.”

For more information on Skiku, contact executive director Robin Kornfeld at 907-227-3434 or email robin@skiku.com.
Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska
SKIING UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

AROUND THE INTERIOR

NSCF Board busy overseeing club operations by Eric Troyer

The work the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks Board of Directors does is critical to keeping NSCF programs running. Here are a few of the issues that the board, often with the help of volunteers, has been dealing with in recent months:

■ Working with the Fairbanks North Star Borough to secure funding for padded flooring in the basement of the Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center. The basement, often referred to as “The Cave,” has a cement floor, but is used often by the FXC program for workouts, and can be slippery with snow or ski boots.

■ Working with the borough on several other issues including: additional lighting in the Terrain Park and in the parking lots.

■ Exploring numerous technology upgrades including the possibility of a chip timing system for races, putting historical records online, and speeding up the club website.

■ Exploring the purchase of additional equipment to improve the Stadium sound system for races and other events.

■ Exploring the hiring of an executive director for the club.

■ Pursuing a grant to replace one of the grooming machines that is aging out.

■ Overseeing the hiring of a new Adult Lessons instructor.

■ Obtaining a grant for purchase of a small excavator for doing work on the trails.

■ Overseeing scheduling of all the NSCF events for the season.

■ Purchasing furniture for new maintenance building.

West Valley Ski Team to hold spaghetti feed at Bush Cups

The West Valley High School Cross Country Ski Team will once again be holding its ever-popular Spaghetti Feed and Silent Auction fundraiser when the Besh Cup races come to Fairbanks in February. The event is held at West Valley High School (8800 Geist Road) on Saturday, February 2, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. It features delicious all-you-can-eat spaghetti with homemade sauce, along with garlic bread, salad, and deserts. A silent auction and raffle accompany the feed. Tickets are $10 per person or $35 per family. All proceeds go to the West Valley High School Cross Country Ski Team.

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 need to 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 youth skiers are in need of your help! We have lots of excited, budding Nordic skiers ready to enjoy this amazing snow and not enough 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 Endestad or Jennifer Williamson (junior nordics@nscfairbanks.org; 907-371-9564). Junior Nordics lessons take place 6:30-7:30 p.m. Mondays at UAF West Ridge, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays/Thursdays at Birch Hill, and 2-3 p.m. Sundays at Birch Hill. There is also a new daytime program from 1-2 p.m. at Birch Hill Ski Center intended for homeschool children.

HelpNSCF 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 its profits through its AmazonSmile program. Find out more about each program at: nscfairbanks.org/support-nscfsupport-nscf > Affiliate Programs.

Skiing info from your smart phone

Use your smart phone’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 keeps you updated

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

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 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.

The Alaska Nordic Skier in Your Inbox!

Get your Alaska Nordic Skier

online and the links below are just a click away. To get only a PDF version, or both a PDF and printed version, please send an email request to nordicskiereditor@gmail.com. You can also get PDF versions at anchor-agenordicski.com/newsletters.htm. Getting the newsletter online only saves our club money, too!

NSCF is on Instagram!

NSCF has an Instagram page. Just search for Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks or go toinstagram.com/ nscfairbanks?hl=en.

Who’s Who in the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

JUNIOR NORDIC HOTLINE

PRESIDENT Steven Hansen president@nscfairbanks.org
VICE PRESIDENT Bruce Jamieson vicepresident@nscfairbanks.org
SECRETARY Helena Rueter secretary@nscfairbanks.org
TREASURER Anna Sorenson treasurer@nscfairbanks.org
ADULT LESSONS COORDINATOR Andie Levesque adultlessons@nscfairbanks.org
FAIRBANKS JUNIOR NORDICS Sally Endestad and Jennifer Williamson jenniornordics@nscfairbanks.org
371-9564
FAIRBANKS CROSS COUNTRY Alasdair Tutt Head Coach, Program Director FXC@nscfairbanks.org
RACE PROGRAM DIRECTOR John Kasten competitionevents@nscfairbanks.org
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR Eric Troyer newsletter@nscfairbanks.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NSCF has an Instagram page. Just search for Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks or go toinstagram.com/ nscfairbanks?hl=en.

M A T S U

DOUBLE

Continued from Page 11

prizes were awarded to top three men’s and women’s overall 30K. On the men’s side, Kenny Brewer won the overall, Peter Hinds took second, and Cody Priest took third. For the women, Alison Ariens won, Jamie Bronga second, and Shannon Brockman third. In the 15K women’s overall the Knapp family went 1-2-3. In the 15K men’s overall Jeremy Kupferschmid won, Mat-Su’s very own David Knopp got second, and MCA president Cory Hinds got third. In the 5K women’s overall Schwartz

METHED from AK Winter Stars won, Spacie Sofija of Colony got second, and Bushey Lydia of Colony got third. In the 5K men’s overall Hansted Noah of Hatcher Pass won, Buchanan Layne of Colony got second, and Harrison Nick of Wasilla RPI got third.

Hands down, the best moment of the 2018 Icicle Double was the Red Lantern Award. Picture this; all the participants have cooled down, changed clothes, are in the chela winning prizes from the raffle (big thank you to our sponsors) and getting their “Woodal” awards when all of a sudden... “Dave is coming up the hill,” says a volunteer. The entire group of people stop what they are doing, get out of their seats, and head out the door to watch and cheer for the last skier to finish. Dave Musgrave (MSSC vice president etc.) skied both 30Ks in a time of 7 hours 48 minutes. This moment totally encapsulates what skiing and racing is about: setting/achieving goals and challenging yourself. It’s about finishing what you start. It’s about being fair for all the people around you no matter how fast or slow. Skiing, ski racing, and the Icicle Double is about making friends, being healthy, and being part of a community.
Loving ‘insanely opposite skills’ of Biathlon: Jim Pasek

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 Jim Pasek, a key organizer with the NSCF Biathlon program.

How are you involved with the NSCF?

I am one of the many hardworking volunteers involved with organizing and running the NSCF Biathlon program. I’ve been a member of NSCF for almost 20 years, taught Junior Nordics for a few years, took a few lessons from Peter Leonard, and have been involved with biathlon for 5-6 years.

How long have you been a cross-country skier? What do you remember about first learning to ski?

Cross-country skiing has been a part of my life since the mid-1990s. Biathlon I joined around 2013 here in Fairbanks. I was always interested in biathlon but Fairbanks was the first place I lived that had a club.

What do you remember about first learning to ski?

I have been a downhill skier for many years and taking up cross-country on my own, I remember vividly my first turn on cross-country skis! I was flying down a hill, which I love to do, when the trail took a left-hand bend. My downhill ski instincts took over and I tipped my skied-on edge to make this beautiful arcing turn when I suddenly realized cross-country skiers do not have an edge and there is no sidecut! I went straight! Needless to say I quickly discovered how rapidly trees approach you when you flying downhill at blazing speed!

I put more pressure on the fronts of my boot tops, which weren’t there. Discovery number two: cross-country ski boots have no ankle support like downhill boots! Losing complete control and still heading for the tree, I left the trail tumbling in a white cloud of powder coming to rest in a heap inches from the base of the tree! This sport certainly was not like downhill skiing, but I love exercising out in the woods and it quickly became part of my lifestyle.

What do you love about cross-country skiing?

I love the way I can de-stress by getting on my skis and taking a long quiet glide through the forest hearing only the squeak of my poles and the hum of my skis! Totally changes my outlook! … What I love about biathlon is the insanely opposite skills it takes to ski hard and fast then calm everything down and focus on markmanship, which requires quiet and precision.

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

I like skiing White Bear at Birch Hill and the state parks along the North Shore of Lake Superior, both for their solitude and beauty.

What other activities do you enjoy besides skiing?

I enjoy being outdoors and the beauty of nature. You can usually find me skiing downhill and cross-country, biking, hiking (mountain and road), hunting, snowmachining, and ATV riding. On most of my adventures I bring along my camera to record the happy faces of those I’m with and the places I’ve been! Almost all the Fairbanks Biathlon Facebook photos were taken with my camera. Check it out and see what fun we have!

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

I drove into Fairbanks from Minnesota on June 21, 1999, to fill in as summer temporary help as a physical therapist at Willow Physical Therapy, and I’m still in Fairbanks 20 years later! I’ve worked at a few physical therapy clinics since then and I’m currently at North Pole Physical Therapy.

I love that I can look out my front window at moose, bears, and foxes! The people of Fairbanks are very welcoming and helpful. And the summers are amazing! Winters are just as spectacular with the aurora and gorgeous snow-covered trees along any trail or road!

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

The only other thing I would like to say is come check out biathlon! Alaska is one of the fastest growing biathlon locations in the United States. The Fairbanks club has doubled in size over the past couple years and has sent biathletes to the last two Arctic Winter Games! We have also sent biathletes to the national races in Vermont and Utah! Two of our biathletes (Everett Darrow and Travis Kulpa) are competing with the National Guard biathlon team in national races against some of the top U.S. biathletes.

More on NSCF Biathlon

Jim, ever the biathlon booster, added more and more information about NSCF Biathlon: NSCF Biathlon meets Sundays after Junior Nordics at the Birch Hill Biathlon Range at the end of White Cub from 3-5 p.m. when temps at 5 or above. We host a race March 30-31 at the Birch Hill range and are expecting around 20 biathletes from the villages and the road system. We also host biathlon clinics at least twice a year. There is a big all-Alaska biathlon clinic in Anchorage every May, which is taught by Olympic athletes and/or U.S. National team members or coaches! Come join us as a participant and/or volunteer! No experience necessary.

And here is an amazing US Biathlon promotional video! This is why we love biathlon:

youtube.com/watch?v=2C8SmKQGk&app=desktop

See the NSCF-Fairbanks Biathlon Facebook page at: tinyurl.com/yc-sewpasm

Use the Borough Winter Trails Challenge to Explore Fairbanks-area trails

BY BRYAN WRIGHT
Tales Coordinator FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept.

Want a great excuse to explore some Fairbanks-area trails on your skis? Well, then, take the Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge.

Almost all of the trails on this winter’s trail challenge are accessible on skis. The challenge will take you to several of the borough’s recreation areas and parks, such as Birch Hill, Tanana Lakes, Two River, Skyline Ridge, as well as the University of Alaska Fairbanks ski trails, Chena River State Recreation Area, and the White Mountains National Recreation Area.

There are a mix of multi-use trails, non-motorized trails, and some ski-only trails to suit the tastes and skill levels. The Trails Challenge signs are typically placed within 1-2 miles of the nearest trailhead and will be marked with orange reflective trail markers.

This year’s Winter Trails Challenge started in December and runs until April 1. It is free and open to anyone who wants to participate. The rules are simple. 1) Find the challenge list of trails on the Trails Challenge webpage tinyurl.com/ybaxsarh. 2) Venture onto the local trail systems around Fairbanks found on the Trails Challenge list. 3) Find the special Trails Challenge signs hidden along the trails. (There are 13 this year. Keep an eye out for orange reflective markers near each sign.) 4) Snap a selfie with the sign and share your photos on social media using the hashtag “#FNSBTrails” or post your picture on our FNSB Parks & Rec Facebook page or email your photos to parks@fnsb.us.

That’s it! Enjoy the memories, smiles, trials and triumphs with all the other challenge finishers! Finishers who find and photograph at least 10 of the Trails Challenge signs will receive a special Trailblazer award and be entered in a prize drawing.

Whether you grab some friends, take the kids, bring the dog, or just go it alone, take the Fairbanks’ Trails Challenge and get to know the tremendous trails crisscrossing our community! Update your information on the trails in this year’s challenge, visit the Borough’s Parks & Recreation Facebook Page (tinyurl.com/zofgaa8) or call the trails coordinator at 459-7001.

Ashley and Jonathan Bradish have fun and ski in style as they complete the 2016-2017 FNSB Trails Challenge.

See the NSCF-Fairbanks Biathlon Facebook page at: tinyurl.com/ybaxsarh
Wilderness Ski Races coming in March

BY ERIC TROYER

Skiers interested in taking on a bigger and wilder ski race than what the club offers will have at least two choices in March. The Chena River to Ridge happens in early March in the Chena River State Recreation Area. The Tanana River Challenge also happens in early March just to the west of Fairbanks. Many skiers have started out with NSCF races and gone on to compete in these races. And neither race conflicts with the Sonot Kkaazoot or any other NSCF race, so you can get them all in! (The Tanana River Challenge happens the day before the Skiathon, so that would fill up your weekend!)

The White Mountains 100, a 100-mile adventure race in the White Mountains National Recreation Area, takes place in late March and has a ski division. The race roster is already filled, but you can put yourself on the waiting list. If that one intrigues you, make sure to keep an eye on Facebook or the website in early November when registration opens. Also, please note that the White Mountains 100 usually starts the day after the Sonot Kkaazoot. A few hardcore skiers have competed in both the same year, but mere mortals usually just pick one.

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Chena River to Ridge

The Chena River to Ridge multi-sport endurance race will be held March 2 in the Chena State Recreation area. The event features skiing, running, and biking categories with 25- and 50-mile distance options. It’s a challenging racecourse on maintained snowmachine trails with big ascents, fast downhill trails, blind turns, and outstanding views of the local hills and the Alaska Range. The course links the Compeau, Colorado Creek, Stiles Creek, and Yukon Quest trails system, and is best attempted with classic ski gear. Although recently, the top finishes have gone to skate skiers. Aid stations with drinks, snacks, and a warm tent are staffed by event personnel at the mid-points of each loop. Eats, drinks, and a warm place to hang out after the race are provided at the start/finish at Twin Bears Camp on Mile 30 CHSR. The event is sponsored by Beaver Sports. For more information: rivertoridge.org and facebook.com/Chena-River-to-Ridge-187619548028898/.

Tanana River Challenge

The Tanana River Challenge (TRC) be will be on Saturday, March 9. TRC is a non-motorized, winter, endurance race in beautiful Interior Alaska. It is open to fat-bikers, skiers, skijorers, and runners. The TRC experience is one of shared, multi-use trails, in a semi-remote setting. The racecourse often changes from year to year, but it usually takes in the wide-open Tanana River and loops through the hilly, scenic Rosie Creek forest. Trails are groomed 5- to 10-feet-wide, but without set tracks. Typically, racers can choose between 25- and 45-mile distances. The race includes many aid stations and an after-party with food and bonfire. The start/finish area is at the Tanana River boat launch off Chena Pump Road. The TRC’s sponsors include Metropolitan Garage, North Pole Veterinary Hospital, Water Wagon, and the UAF Veterinary Medicine Program. For more information: tananariverchallenge.org and facebook.com/TananaRiverChallenge.


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Proud supporter of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks.
Three young AK biathletes make Team USA

Twelve Alaskan biathletes raced in the Youth and Junior World Championships Team Trials at Soldier Hollow, Utah, in December, all competing for slots on Team USA that will race in the International Biathlon Union’s Youth and Junior World Championships in Osrblie, Slovakia, from Jan. 26 to Feb. 3.

After enduring races above 5,000 feet elevation and skiing on challenging World Cup trails, three Alaskans emerged to make Team USA: Helen Wilson, Maja Lapkass and Maxime Germain, all of Anchorage Biathlon Club under the tutelage of coaches Marine Dusser-Bjornsen, Scott Bebyea and Marine Bottesi.

Maxime, 17, put in a strong performance with two second-place finishes and his consistent fast skiing and on-target shooting was awarded with trip to a Slovakia. He hit 80 percent of his targets on the pursuit and sprint races. He skis for West High School and Alaska Pacific University. This is Maxime’s second championships having raced in Otepaa, Estonia last biathlon season.

Helen’s week of high-altitude ac-

Alaska’s young shooting and skiing stars who will compete for Team USA are, from left, Maja Lapkass, Helen Wilson and Maxime Germaine.

Three young AK biathletes make Team USA

BY ZUZANA ROGERS, PT, SCD, SCS, COMT

Got Low Back Pain? Try these simple solutions

BY ZUZANA ROGERS, PT, SCD, SCS, COMT

Three young AK biathletes make Team USA

Three young AK biathletes make Team USA

BY ZUZANA ROGERS, PT, SCD, SCS, COMT

Have you ever suffered an episode of lower back pain? Chances are good that you have. In fact, 90% of the population suffers from back pain at some point of their lives. The good news is that back pain in cross-country skiers and runners has lower prevalence than in non-active people. And luckily, most cases of low back pain resolve within 6 weeks.

Types of low back pain you may experience:

1. Temporary pain that may feel like muscle spasms can come on suddenly. Although the pain can be quite severe, it is isolated to the back.
2. Radiating pain that travels down the back or side of one or both legs is known as sciatica. This type of pain is often caused by an irritated nerve and may have underlying causes such as disc issue.
3. Chronic pain or aching in the lower back can sometimes indicate arthritis, but it might also be a sign of overuse.

When assessing low back pain, physical therapists strive to identify a cause — what structure is causing pain — and also any contributing factors. Everything within our bodies is interconnected and needs to work in sync. Here are some of the factors that contribute to low back pain:

- Poor hip mobility can place increased stress on the lower back area.
- Poor thoracic spine mobility can also place unnecessary stress on the lower back area.
- Core stability and strength. A strong midsection creates a beautifully strong base for the function of the rest of the body.
- ‘Weekend Warrior’. Regular physical activity makes the whole body and low back strong. It is big swings in activity that overload tissues and may cause pain.
- Training errors: Doing too much too soon, or not doing enough of the right things.
- Core stability and strength: A strong midsection

Tips you can try:

1. Strengthen core muscles

This is an example of a great core strength routine by Stu McGill, a renowned back expert:

2. Increase hip and mid/upper back mobility

3. Keep moving and be smart about it. Know that even though you have pain, it is safe to move, and you will not inflict more damage. Inactivity, bed rest, and sitting are the worst enemies of your back!

4. Make sure you are moving well, then move often and add strength. In that order! Simple skill-based activity is great to assure that your body is moving well; this includes Yoga and Pilates. Then progress to your regular training and strength routines.

5. Regular exercise – including skill (balance, technique training), mobility, endurance, and strength (work up to heavy loads, but work with a coach or a trainer to make sure your technique is adequate).

6. If you wish to progress faster or if the pain persists, have your back evaluated by a physical therapist that is skilled in your sport. A therapist can guide you to full recovery and get you back to doing what you love doing.

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Do you want to learn more? Come see us at Advanced Physical Therapy! Call for an appointment at any of our five locations statewide, or visit us online at aptak.com.