Thank you to all the Alaska Nordic skiing clubs, members, groomers, volunteers, program leaders, sponsors, and everyone else who made the 2018-2019 ski season so amazing!
Thank you and best wishes, Erin!

Erin was dedicated to NSAA, spending hours perfecting budgets and reports, and we always knew NSAA was in good hands when Erin was around. We wish her the very best with her new position and look forward to seeing her at events and in our amazing community.

Thank you, Erin Beam! NSAA and our ski community are better because of you.

Thank you 2018-19 NSAA Volunteers!

The volunteer force of this community is strong and we appreciate all that individuals and organizations give each year to ensure NSAA’s success. Thank you specifically to these volunteers for your support. We do our best to thank each and every volunteer, but it is not always possible to capture everyone’s name. Please forgive us and let us know if we inadvertently left your name off. Your contributions to NSAA are greatly appreciated!

NSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Joey Caterinskha, Sara Miller, Mike Miller, Josh Nisa, Elizabeth Arnold, Alex Grumman, Will Earnhart, Tim Miller and Claire LeClaire.

AMH Anchorage Cup Series

JUNIOR NORDIC
Program Director: Shannon Donley. Volunteers: Shauna Sedisner, Ryan Padgett, Jason Alward, Ayme Johnson, Jason Hartz, Alex Post, Julie Gautier, and many many others!

ALASKA SKI FOR WOMEN

SEASON KICKOFF & SKI SWAP
Denali Strabell, Eric Strabell, Matt Paul, Chris Turner, Rosana Jines, Tricia Hura, Terre Agee, June Takagi, Susan Cowther, Mark Thomas, Diane Rainey, John Travostino, Tascha Beng, Sophia Thompson, Ricky Rion, Jade Bean, Sara Miller, Lies Parker, Josh Nisa, Lauri Bassett, Amanda Thompson, Annette Brion, Delya Waff, Aylee, Marsha Hoch, Fulie Truskowski, John Peaco, Elizabeth Manning, Barbara Amy, Thomas Hoicker, Aaron Mote, Steve Beardal, Elena Hinds, Patrick Cameron, Fumi Camahan, Afrin Camahan, Tasha Lucas, Donna Moro, Lea Lague, David Crivancra, Ella Embree, David Stampa, J. Harris, Seth Anderson, Mis Anderson, Brian Kirchner, John Wasanen, Geoff Wright, Cathy Wright, Shelly Laws, Cara Helman, Nick Jakobson, Elizabeth Knaup, Libby Rangel, Kristin Ficks, Kendra Beck, Valerie Floyd, Alin Williams, Jim Wells, Betsy Arnold, Alex Grumman, Sara Miller, Karli Walsh, Will Earnhart, Sheila Reda, Megs Testimousa, Tamra Kornfield, Jack Porter, and Shannon Donley.

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ALASKA SKI FOR WOMEN
SAANSA Member Spotlight: Ryan and Steep Ruppert

Ryan and Steep Ruppert are always thrilled to celebrate and thank its special members. This season, SAANSA is spotlighting a handful of those supporters with select stories in the April newsletter. April’s NSAA Members of the Month are Ryan and Steep Ruppert, who have been involved with NSAA since they started sophomore year, which is the time their relationship began.

What do you love about Nordic skiing?

It’s a great way to see our town, and get ourselves, and our pup (Panda) out and active.

We appreciate your generous support of NSAA! Why do you choose to give to NSAA?

We believe in the sustainability of the work NSAA does for the community. It’s a well-run organization that really is a partner with our Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

What does NSAA’s mission mean to you?

It’s really all about connecting us, and keeping us all involved in this northern ski community.

Do you have any standout moments from skiing, connecting with NSAA and/or participating in programs or events that you would like to share?

Our third date was Ski Train, and on a sunny February day in 2017 in a foot of fresh powder we got engaged. Conversation was the worst day possible to skate ski, but she stuck with me.

JUNIOR NATIONALS


JEAN RUPPERT

Jean Ruppert is a faithful supporter of NSAA! Why do you choose to give to NSAA? It’s a great way to see our town, and give ourselves, and our pup (Panda) out and active! Thank you to the Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

FULCO

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New Tour features, same old fun

The Tour of Anchorage rolled into a new era in 2019. A new fat-tire bike event boosted the Tour to its largest field since 2014, with 1,174 entrants and 1,098 finishers.

The Fat Bike Tour of Anchorage, with 50K and 40K events, is believed to be the only bike race in the United States held on the same day and same courses as its ski marathon. Taking up the challenge were 174 bikers, including 19 who accomplished the “Tour Double” by completing the ski race followed by a bike race with minimal rest in-between. Brent Lowen was the fastest among them, placing 10th in both the 50K ski and 50K bike.

Patrick Johnson and Caroline Brisbois won the 50K ski races (and $1,000 plus an Alaska Airlines ticket) while Will Ross and Megan Chelf claimed the 50K bike titles. Ross’ 2:02 bike title was more than eight minutes fastest than Johnson’s winning ski time.

The improved turnout has TOA officials hopeful they can attract 1,500 or more combined entrants in the future, a benchmark that was regularly achieved until recent years. Aiding that mission could be the addition of a 25K bike event and a renewed focus on recruiting high school skiers.

The 2020 Tour of Anchorage will be Sunday, March 1.

– Matias Saari,
Tour of Anchorage Director

Junior Nordic skiers learned, raced and played

NSAA Junior Nordics had a great season, with many groups at full capacity, including the popular 4:30 p.m. After School groups at Hillside and Kincaid. From our Polar Cubs to our Hawks, all of our skiers made tremendous progress this season. We also had a record number of Junior Nordic kids participate in the AMH Cup races, Besh Cups and Tuesday Night Ski Races this year.

As the second session wrapped up, we were thrilled that many of our skiers were taking advantage of our ski rental extension program and were still hitting the ski trails with their friends and families.

In addition to many fabulous coaches, our Site Directors went above and beyond to make Junior Nordic the amazing program that it is. Thanks to Geoff Wright, John Hemmeter, Henry Arend, Tamra Kornfield, Martin Hanson, Dave Ward, Dan Bosch, Holly Rinehart, Sabrina Farmer and Art Harmon. Another huge thanks to Alaska Cleaners/Dondee’s Laundromat, who kindly washed hundreds of Junior Nordic Jackets for free, to AMH for repairing ski and its amazing support in so many ways, and to the countless volunteers and parents who make the program succeed.

– Shannon Donley,
NSAA Junior Nordic Director

All aboard another successful Ski Train!

This year marked another amazing adventure on the NSAA Ski Train! Each year, the train sees its veterans who ride religiously while bringing new skiers to the party. Regardless of how many years you have under your belt, the smiles stretched nine cars long. The snow was punchy, but the outdoor
**NSAA Ski Jumping program soars on national stage**

Over the past four weeks, our jumpers have represented Team Alaska at a national level in a variety of competitions. We started the travels with a camp in Steamboat Springs, Colo., which culminated in the Western Regional Championships. We had seven athletes ranging from ages 11-17 jumping on four hills. We also took home eight medals from Steamboat!

**RECAP**

Continued from Page 4

spring fun with friends made the day a memorable one!

Shout out to all the train riders in their fabulous costumes! A huge thank you to the Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol for keeping our skiers safe and being on duty from start to finish. Ski Train sponsors joined in the fun by dressing up and decorating their cars; brewery sponsors provided beer to their riders; and the Wild Scoops car got ice cream sandwiches! Lastly, in an exciting end to the day, the 2019 winner of the Trek Fatbike Raffle was on the train: congratulations, Greg Solomon!

We cannot thank enough the NSAA Ski Train’s Director, Travis Taylor, for all his hard work and boundless energy and enthusiasm. Travis’ commitment to NSAA and the mission of supporting trails with events like Ski Train is admirable. Under Travis’ leadership and his excellent group of volunteers, the Ski Train continues to reach new levels of success.

– Sara Kamahele, NSAA Program Manager

**Smiles, skiing and so much more at Ski 4 Kids**

Obstacle courses, biathlon, sit skis, fat tire bikes, snowshoes, orienteering, ski jumping, ski races, hot dogs, cookies, hot chocolate … oh my! The 2019 Ski 4 Kids event was a rousing success, with nearly 500 participants and approximately $8,500 raised for ski equipment grants. Thanks to our generous sponsors, including ConocoPhillips, Banker Law Group, LaToche Pediatrics, Anchorage Pediatric Group, Eisberg Family Foundation, CWR Engineering, and Midnight Sun Smiles. In-kind sponsors Great Harvest Bread Company, Kaladi Brothers Coffee and Trax Outdoor Store provided much-appreciated refreshments for all.

Congratulations to this year’s grant recipients, including the East Anchorage High School Cross Country Ski Team, Chinook Elementary School, Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences, Anchorage Parks and Recreation Ski Outreach Program, and Susitna Elementary School. Selection was very difficult, and we commend all applicants on their initiative and incredible ski programs. We were so inspired by the applications! We encourage unsuccessful applicants to try again next year, and we hope others will apply as well, as we work to increase the funds we have available to support youth ski programs.

We could not hold this event without the efforts of NSAA staff, community representatives and numerous volunteers. Its success is a true testament to the enthusiasm and support of the Anchorage community. Thank you to each and everyone of you! In particular, event organizer Erin Whitney Witmer wishes to extend a special thanks to her volunteer parent organizing crew who met monthly leading up to the event, including Iain Miller, Beth Elliott, Lia Slemons, Agie Kupilik, Lauri Bassett, Jean Miller, Cathy Miller, Tom Miller, Alice Knapp, Allene Whitney and Darcy Dugan. What a bunch of rock stars! And our meetings were pretty fun, too. We hope to see you at next year’s Ski 4 Kids. Thank you so much for your support, and don’t hesitate to let us know how you’d like to be involved next year.

– Erin Whitney Witmer, Ski 4 Kids Director

**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 Tasteee Freez mall. We rent skate skis and classic skis from race to touring styles. We wax with same-day service, and yep, 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 Biathlon

Sixteen skiers ages 10-17 took part in the Biathlon Alaska Spring Break Biathlon Camp in early March. Biathlon Alaska staff was joined by U.S. Biathlon Team and National Guard Biathlon team member Travis Cooper. On the second day of camp, former UAA skier and U.S. Olympic Team biathlete Deb Nordyke dropped in with her three-time Olympic biathlete husband Curt Schreiner and gave the kids a great inspirational talk.

Backcountry Tours Back with a bang

NSAA Backcountry Tour participants marveled at the good snow conditions in the Chugach Mountains and other scenic areas they visited between November and April. Our volunteer trip leaders organized more than 12 trips this year, giving skiers of all abilities the chance to join multiple excursions in our incredible park lands. These excursions are a great way to gain confidence as a backcountry skier and make new friends and memories.

One of our most memorable trips was the Matanuska Glacier trip in January. More than 25 NSAA participants braved subzero temperatures and brisk wind while skiing out Caribou Creek toward the glacier. They were well rewarded for their effort – the sun came out, the wind died down, and they savored incredible views of the glacier. A special thanks goes out to the Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol whose members help NSAA tour leaders assess safe trail conditions and assist our participants with everything from blister treatment to emergency gear repair.

A spring skiing party at SKAN 24

Remarkably, 76 brave and hardy skiers celebrated spring by participating in the SKAN 24 (Ski All Night Kincaid) lap race at Kincaid Park from 10 a.m., March 23 to 10 a.m., March 24. Categories included 6-, 12- and 24-hour races, with solo, duo, quad and octo divisions. Our SKANers experienced true Alaska spring weather conditions – sun, clouds, rain, wind storms, slushy trails, icy trails and muddy trails all in the same race. Yet attitudes were positive and there were smiles all around.

SKAN guaranteed to challenge one’s endurance. It also provided a unique opportunity to ski popular trails both forwards and backwards. Included with entry was a premier stadium campsite for tents and camping chairs, all night slumber party in the wax bunker, Midnight Madness team bonding, chance to win fun raffle prizes, and gourmet grub options: grilled sausages in the afternoon and pancakes in the morning.

Here are some fun SKAN statistics: 586 laps (6K each) in over 24 hours. Total kilometers skied was 3,675, that’s like skiing to Fairbanks and back three times! Our very own Adam Loomis, NSAA’s Ski Jumping Director extraordinare, skied 39 laps for a total of 247.5K in 24 hours!

Thank you to the dedicated group of volunteers, led by Geof and Cathy Wright, who braved the 24-hour shift!

Ski for Women: Good times on the trails, big impact in our community

Snow and cold weather made for perfect trail conditions at the 2019 Alaska Ski for Women at Kincaid Park. Gray skies blocked the sun but provided warmth for our 653 attendees and hundreds of volunteers and community members as we celebrated the 23rd year of this successful community event. We had 42 women participate in the duathlon, 117 in the freestyle/skate race, and 120 women in the classic event. Over 250 women participated in the “party wave,” many of whom were skiing for the very first time!

Next season’s Alaska Ski for Women arrives on February 2, 2020. It takes numerous volunteers to put on this great event for the community. Whether you can commit a few hours, or a few hours each month to help with the 24th annual event, there are a variety of ways you can help! Email alaskaskiforwomen@gmail.com to learn more!

Photo by Adam Loomis.
The AlAskA nordic skier

BY HANS HILL

March and April are always a mixed blessing time for skiers. The conditions can be peaking, but also rapidly depleting. Daylight is advancing as fast as the depth of snow decreases. The temperatures are wonderful … but also can be too wonderful. It is the opposite of “Game of Thrones;” winter is ending.

But that is one of the sex appeal of the end of the season. You may just have had the perfect ski of the season on any giving outing, or the best may have already happened. Did you head out too early and not give the sun enough time to do its job? Did you wait too late to try out that epic arena for crust skiing that your bros have been telling you about all season?

Hopefully these regrets are not what have filled your skiers’ heart, nor are you afflicted with such thoughts as I am at the end of each ski season. For those of you in my boat, you see the passing of Alaska’s best season of the year as a vexation. The coming of six months of waiting. Bah humbug!

However, as I grow nearer to my fortieth decade in this wondrous state, I’ve tried to redirect my negative energy in more productive ways. As my very positive-thinking wife has tried to coach me on, is to reflect on the “blessings” that have bestowed themselves on me in the past. In the case of my past season, I should be remembering the fantastic early conditions at Independence Mine in the still air moonlight. Or the time I headed out to Government Peak after work in December after the night prior had brought a fresh four inches and the groomers had taken care to turn that goodness in to fresh, beautiful, perfect corduroy that only three other skiers had been on prior. How about the first ever Besh Cup Races being held at that same venue? And the Icicle Double … Oh, let’s not forget the NCAA race, too!

And if I was to continue this conversation with my very patient wife, she would remind me to think of those folks who made my positive experiences a reality. For me this is when that negative frame of mind changes and then focuses upon what really matters, that the opportunity to ski in the Valley actually exists.

The Mat-Su Ski Club began some 15-plus years ago with a handful of committed skiers looking to expand the Nordic skiing opportunities in the Mat-Su. From there grew a club that produced a group of volunteers regularly grooming local trails, improving a number of those trails and ultimately becoming a major stakeholder in building Government Peak Recreation Area. With GSPA in place, programs and events could be developed that were unheard of in the Valley, which included, Junior Nordic (now 330+ kids strong), Adult Lessons, the Icicle Double, the Mat-Su Ski for Woman, Northern Lights community race series and many, many more.

Speaking of, GSPA has grown from 7 kilometers of beginner/intermediate trail system with a parking lot, to now a full-fledged elite area that includes 5K of competitive trails, a stadium, a chalet, a terrain park, and big plans to come.

But like all great things, this club only exists because of time, energy and money, and there have been many individuals and entities that have contributed one or all three of those items over the years. From the tens of thousands of hours to the hundreds of thousands of dollars, this community has truly made this club and its trails a magnificent spectacle. To the sponsors who have helped fund our trail construction, our events and have been a financial backbone to the club, thank you for being the life blood that makes all our ideas possible. They include: Active Soles, Body in Balance, and Active Body; Alaska Plant Materials Center; APR Rental; Arkose Brewery; Backcountry Bike and Ski; Capstone Clinic; Colver Surveying; Kate and Mike Montano; Kuchar Construction; Lifetime Adventure; Mat-Su Borough; Mat-Su Borough Bed Tax; Mat-Su Borough School District; Mat-Su Health Foundation; Mat-Su Junior Nordics; Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation; MEA; Mountain Streams Bed and Breakfast; MTA; Pioneer Peak Orthopedics; Rasmuson Foundation; and REI.

To the grooming volunteers who have done a fantastic job this season bringing us the trail conditions of our dreams, thank you for giving up your nights and weekends. Moose Range Groomers: Bill Weiss, Billie Hahn, Keith Wieeneke, Kirby Spangler, Matt Lemons, Shane Barber, Karen Hoff, Independence Mine, Archangel Rd, and the Government Peak Rec Area Groomers: Ashley Wise, Mark Strabel, Zack Steer, Jeff Kase, Jerry Hupp, Gill Carr, Ed Strabel. To those folks who have helped at the high school races, Besh Cup Races, our first NCAA race and the Icicle Double: thank you for showing up early and staying out late, bundled up so that we can put on such successful races.

To our construction crew and trail volunteers who have spent their summer in creating some of the best skiing trails I have had the pleasure of skiing. Big thank yous to Mark Strabel, Ed Strabel, Lucas Parker and Dave Warner who logged more than 800 hours of volunteer time into the competition loops. And thank you to those who helped out numerous hours doing hand work during our work parties.

To those great people who have helped foster our Junior Nordic program, to include the awesome steering committee members, the coaches, the “sweepers” and the parents who help shuttle kids to practice, thank you all.

To our Board of Directors, who have spent countless hours planning and managing club projects and events and overall shaping what the club becomes, thank you! The board is comprised of Lucas Parker; Dave Musgrave; Jerry Hupp; Lorene Lynn; Lori Berrigan; Lori Staub; Terry Slaven; Jeff Kase; Ed Strabel; Mark Strabel; Chris Tomsen; Chris Gierymski; Gene Backus.

And a big thanks to our administrator, Tammy Hill, who has transformed so much of the workload for the board and events so all those folks can focus their efforts in other manners … and also keeps the board in line.

It is such an immense list of entities that makes the snowflakes into a skiable surface that sometimes it’s important to focus on this fact while you (or I) might be despairing about the departure of that very surface we love so well. See you next season!

ANCHORAGE: Kikkan gives a golden gift to NSAA’s Junior Nordic program

Thanks to our Kikkan Randall, our hometown Olympic gold medalist and skiing superstar, the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage’s Junior Nordic program is the 2019 recipient of Fischer’s Grant Program. Fischer Skis is in its second year of the ongoing grant program aimed at promoting access and engagement to skiing in the United States. Fischer Skis and Kikkan Randall presented NSAA’s Junior Nordic program with 27 pairs of ski, a mix of junior RCS skate and classic ski with bindings. At AMH, our equally awesome community partner, have graciously agreed to receive and mount up the skis for the program.

Kikkan credits Junior Nordic for the beginning of her Nordic journey, saying, “This is where it all began for me. My introduction to cross-country skiing was with the Anchorage Junior Nordic League. Junior Nordic’s goal is to instill a lifelong love of cross-country skiing in Anchorage’s youth, of which over 625 skiers participated in the 2019 spring session. This non-competitive program for kids ages 6 to 14 is all about getting active and enjoying Anchorage’s fabulous parks. In celebration of the grant, Kikkan came to AMH on April 5 to sign posters and skis, as well as share her gold medal with Anchorage. Thank you Kikkan, Fischer Skis, and AMH!”
America’s – and Alaska’s – best young skiers shined bright at Junior Nationals

More than 400 of America’s best young cross-country skiers competed for national titles at the 2019 U.S. Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Junior National Championships, March 11-16 at Kincaid Park. And after a week of impressive, and at times dominant, individual race wins, Alaska’s Kendall Kramer and Gus Schumacher outdid themselves with dramatic comeback anchor legs on the final day of racing, giving their respective teams victories in 3X3K freestyle relays. The wins gave Kramer, a U18 skier from Fairbanks, and Schumacher, a U20 skier from Anchorage, rare four-race JN sweeps.

New England retained the Alaska Cup for the sixth-straight year and for the 10 of the last 11 years. The Alaska Cup Award is given to recognize the outstanding divisional team performance in cross-country skiing at the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Junior Nationals. New England skiers posted 1,427 points, followed by Alaska in second at 1,207, and Midwest in third at 973.

More than 100 coaches, countless parents and family members, and more than 200 volunteers joined premier title sponsor ConocoPhillips Alaska and many other sponsors and organizations in fueling the event. Ten teams/divisions representing multiple states/regions at this year’s event: host Team Alaska; defending Alaska Cup champs Fairbanks; New England; Pacific Northwest; Far West; Rocky Mountain; Intermountain; Midwest; Great Lakes;

Wrapping up a special season for Nordic skiers, leaders

Cross Country Alaska had a successful season due to the efforts of many members of the Nordic ski community. First and foremost, CCAK could not operate without the continued support from ConocoPhillips, the title sponsor for the Besh Cup races. In addition to that financial support, the efforts of many people keep our organization running.

The CCAK Board of Directors is comprised of leaders from Soldotna, Anchorage and Fairbanks. Thank you to Kevin Donley, Ja Dorris, John Estle, Sue Faulkner, Lin Hindermann, Calisa Kastning, Anson Moxness, John Pothast and Mark Strabel. The CCAK Board of Directors bids farewell to John Estle at the end of this season. John has accepted the Northern Alaska Director’s position with the Arctic Winter Games International Committee. Estle has a long history as a leader in the Nordic skiing community not only in Alaska, but also as head coach of the U.S. Cross Country Ski Team from 1999-2001 and program director for the U.S. Olympic Education Center in Marquette, Michigan, in 1993-94. Estle is an International Ski Federation-certified technical delegate and homologation inspector for cross country skiing. His expertise in this area has directly impacted the top-notch trails our skiers enjoy. Thankfully, CCAK will continue to benefit from Estle’s expertise as the Chair of the CCAK Competition Committee.

The CCAK Competition Committee handles all ski racing related matters. It is comprised of coaches, officials and host club representatives who provide input, create the season schedule, adjust the schedule as necessary, enforce CCAK and U.S. Ski & Snowboard rules, select Team Alaska coaches, and review policies and procedures as necessary to keep developing Alaska cross-country skiers. The committee meets monthly, and during the racing months meets with a formal agenda to put together race plans with each host club. Thank you to the regular members of the CCAK Competition Committee: Ja Dorris, Eric Strabel, Sam Sterling, Jan Buron, Andrew Dougherty, Stan Carrick, Sara Kamenebe, Anson Moxness, Andrew Kastning, Cody Priest, Branden Fontana, John Estle, Alasdair Tutt, Susan Faulkner, Scott Jerome, Nick Crawford, John Pothast, Joey Caterinichio, Matt Paulin, Lin Hinderman, Mikey Evans and Mark Strabel.

During the years that Alaska hosts Junior Nationals, we are fortunate to take on more than the usual number Team Alaska coaches. Thanks to the efforts of Ja Dorris and Mikey Evans as co-head coaches, their staff of coaches who offered their talents at Junior Nationals. This club coaches have invested time training with U.S. Ski & Snowboard and offered their talents in a variety of ways at Junior Nationals Cody Priest, Eric Strabel, Jan Buron, Rachelle Kanady, Sam Sterling, Stan Carrick, Branden Fontana, Alasdair Tutt, Aasne Hoveid, Greta Anderson, Naomi Kiekimtveid, Conner Truskowski, Sarissa Lammers, Galen Johnston, Marion Woods, and Karina Pecker.

Thanks to the fast action of the members of the Mat-Su Ski Club and its Government Peak Recreational Area (GPRA) facilities, Besh Cup races 1 & 2 remained in Southcentral Alaska. GPRA has been developing quality trails in recent years and was able to come online as a destination for Besh Cup races. CCAK looks forward to more races at this fantastic venue.

For the first time in several years, CCAK was able to offer a USSS Level 100 Coaches Clinic. Thank you to UAP coach Elisha Albrigsten and Alaska Winter Stars coach Greta Anderson for leading this clinic in December to train 20 coaches; 10 of whom received Level 100 certification. Other participants lead the Municipality of Anchorage ski lessons, Anchorage Junior Nordic, Skiklo, and GPRA Junior Nordic.

In 2017, CCAK saw the need to increase interest in youth ski racing and agreed to support regions with youth ski racing programs. CCAK supports the racing programs offered in Soldotna and Fairbanks, and this year partnered with the UAA Ski Team to offer the Anchorage Tuesday Night Ski Races in February. Each week, 100 racers attended these low-key races. Special thanks to UAA assistant coach Marine Dussier, athletes of the UAA Ski Team, Adam Verrier, Lin Hinderman, and The Bake Shop of Girdwood for making these spring races so successful. They were so successful that the Anchorage Biathlon Club hosted a relay race. These spring weekend races energized the skiing community and the groups plan to host these once again in 2020.
JUNIOR NATIONALS
Continued from Page 8

High Plains; and Mid-Atlantic.

The week of racing featured four events: the individual freestyle, the classic sprint, the mass start classic, and the 3X3K freestyle relay. There are three racing divisions per gender – U20 (Ages 18-19), U18 (Ages 16-17) and U16 (Ages 14-15).

Sun Valley SEF was crowned the top Junior National Club Team with 1,501 points, followed by Loppet Nordic Racing at 1,126 and Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center at 1,005. Anchorage's West High earned the Roger Weston Award for top high school performance. West scored 819 points, with Fairbanks' West Valley High second at 731, Anchorage's Service High third at 711 and Forest Lake High School (Minnesota) fourth at 648.

Junior Nationals come to Alaska in five-year rotations, splitting between Fairbanks and Anchorage: they last took place in Fairbanks in 2013 and in Anchorage in 2008.


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.

SPONSORED

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the ALASKA nordic skier
Bear Creek Winery boosts with wine

From its startup in 2003, Bear Creek Winery has donated to the KNSC. At the popular wine and cheese event every February and other ski events, the winery supplies dozens of bottles of wine. Gift baskets with enough goodies – including wine – to fuel a great picnic appear at silent auctions and fund raisers.

KNSC is only one of the local nonprofits that Bear Creek supports. Louis Maurer, manager of the business, says, “In 2018 we contributed to 50 events. Each event benefits an organization, and there can be multiple events for a given organization. My estimation is that there are approximately 45 organizations that benefited from the events that we donated to.”

The winery has local roots and contributes to the economy. Maurer’s wife, Jasmine, is the daughter of Bear Creek’s founders. Maurer started working at the winery about 10 years ago, stepping into the management role when his in-laws retired. “We value local organizations that promote healthy living in our community,” Louis said.

“Local” also includes buying local berries and fruit. Bear Creek’s wines combine grape wines and fruit wines. The winery’s website says, “We have spent decades developing first, fruit wines and then fruit/grape wine blends and second, a network of local growers to source raw fruit from.”

In 2018, Maurer estimates, the winery bought locally: 10,000 pounds of rhubarb, 6,000 pounds of blueberries, 4,000 pounds of raspberries, 1,300 pounds of black currants, 262 pounds of currants, 132 pounds of cranberries, 50 pounds of strawberries, and 3,400 pounds of apples.

Today, Bear Creek produces 15 varieties of wine range from dry (such as the Alaska Chardonnay, featuring rhubarb) to medium-bodied (the ShirazZeberry, a blend of shiraz and raspberry) and sweet (such as the Pomegranate wine or the Alaskan Port). The wines have won multiple silver and bronze awards from the Finger Lakes International Wine Competition. The most popular wines under the Bear Creek Winery label are Strawberry Rhubarb, Pomegranate, and Wildberry, in order of popularity.

Restaurants around the state serve Bear Creek wine. Their staff may even approach your table to recommend the “local” Alaska Bear Creek wine. “Local” for Maurer also includes participating in KNSC events. His wife is on the KNSC board and teaches the Women’s Nordic program.

“Jasmine and I love skiing as a form of exercise and a form of entertainment in the winter. In the summer, we enjoy all the outdoor activities,” he said. “Jasmine and I were talking about the Winter Gear and Ski Swap when I was at the winery last year. We decided to add it to our event calendar.”

Donations include “a diverse offering of ski clothing, ski equipment, and ski waxes and wax services,” said Claire Waxman, a partner in the business. “We also donate a lot of shop time to take care of the grooming equipment. We are a Polaris dealer, and the ski club has a number of ATVs on tracks. Parts do get worn out, so the club gets them for maintenance. We frequently give them discounts on parts and service.”

Homer Saw & Cycle also offers a 10% discount on all ski-related items, and a 15% discount on ski packages for current KNSC members.

Bear Creek Winery fuels the machines

The Fritz Creek General Store has been a part of Homer for decades. The building originated as a cultural center for homesteading neighbors

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club
Homer, Alaska

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club thanks the Banner Club

From the sweet, fast groomed Nordic trails to the parties after KNSC events, the great patrons in the KNSC Banner Club – those who donate over $1,000 in goods and services throughout the winter – support all the KNSC activities.

Four local businesses have generously been members of the Banner Club for a long time. And they provide more goods and services to countless organizations and events in Homer.

Next time you visit our patrons – Bear Creek Winery, Fritz Creek General Store, Homer Saw & Cycle, and Ulmer’s Chain Reaction – thank them for their generosity. An even better “thank you” is to bring your business to these local donors.

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See AROUND THE BAY, Page 11

the ALASKA nordic skier
Thankful for super skiers, magnificent members, great gnomes, terrific trails and a windy (and windy) season

BY DEB ESSEX

At this point, the only groomed snow left in Girdwood is on the Nordic SK Loop. The meadows have been under water for about a month, and most skiers are venturing out to find coveted crust skiing on sunny mornings. My neighbor is using his leaf blower while I type.

Looking back over the 2018-19 season, Alaska delivered some of the biggest rain/windstorms we have seen in the valley. In December, the week before Solstice, over 75 trees fell due to snow-load and wind. Nine of those trees fell on the Girdwood SK Loop. Because of fantastic board members Jim Brahma, Peter Zag, and Brian Burnett, the tree-clearing work by Matt Moccoso and crew, and Aylesaska Resort lending a hand with their Pisten Bully, we managed to pull off our annual Solstice Light Celebration. More wind events came the March, and again, trail volunteer Jim Brahma cleared the SK Loop. The grooming in Girdwood is always a challenge, and I would like to thank the following people for their time spent wrangling grooming-attachments on snow-machines and venturing out over unpredictable snow-pack.

A huge thank you to GNSC board member Brian Burnett for coordinating Pisten Bully grooming by Aylesaska Resort, Chugach Powder Guides for grooming with their CAT and filling the soft spots in the meadows to ensure safe passage, board members Peter Zag and Jim Brahma for their endless efforts in grooming and trail signage, board member Brian Sullivan for signage and dog waste disposal stations, grommers Jeff and Sharon Samuels, Ethan Tyler, Shane Bowlin, Kyle Kelly, Eben Stone, Tim Charonn, and John Gallop.

A huge thank you to our working GNSC board members. I am always amazed what such a small group can accomplish. Extra thank you to Justin and Mary Thomas who keep our accounts balanced, send out mailings, and help run our events. Member Ari Stasiasson stepped down this spring, but has agreed to help out with events in the future (win-win!). We welcome our newest members Karen Loso, Brian Kari, and Nels Barber to the board. All three are Girdwood residents, active skiers, and all are used to be coached by Lin Hindermann!

And finally, a huge thank you to our members. You are the reason we can accomplish the grooming, signage, and trail safety. You helped create our fun Solstice Celebration. You volunteer for the Aylesaska Skimeister and Girdwood Marathon. You write letters of support for our continued goal to create more multi-use trails in Girdwood. Thank you and happy spring skiing!

GIRDWOOD NORDIC SKI CLUB MEMBERS 2018-19

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AROUND THE BAY

Continued from Page 10

Ulmer’s Drug & Hardware

Ulmer’s Chain Reaction Sports: Long story of KNSC support – and hidden surprises

The logo on Ulmer’s website says it all: “Don’t let winter get you down! Get outside with our vast selection of cross-country skis, ice skates, and snowshoes.”

For over 25 years, Ulmer’s has donated to the KNSC. Ski discounts from the store include 10% off for sporting equipment, goods, and waxing – for KNSC members, coaches, and teams; a 15% discount for school teams from the elementary through high school levels; and a 15% discount for the Junior Nordic members and coaches. Over the years, Ulmer’s has contributed to fundraising events for the Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Team. The store has also sent skis to racing teams in the Pacific North-west and New Zealand.

And one of the best donations from Ulmer’s is Steve Soistman, who handles all things related to skiing, from helping you find the best equipment for your particular needs to giving your skis a super wax job. You have to look for this guy.

He has a small shop in a corner of Ulmer’s sports department where he has lots of the ski equipment and the waxing equipment and supplies. And he donates a lot of his time and his advice for free to the KNSC. Soistman has skied for over 35 years and goes to Norway in winter for ski vacations. “I am really dedicated to the craft,” he said.

Growing up in Florida, Soistman fished, sailed, and surfed. As a young adult, he spent time in Chicago.

“I came to Alaska after I learned about winters from spending time in Chicago,” he said. “I liked winter and outdoor sports.”

And Soistman has learned more about skiing from working at Ulmer’s. For beginning skiers, he advises, “take a lesson and buy good equipment.” For new skiers, “first buy boots, then poles and, last, the skis."

“Having a good fitting boot is the basis of starting Nordic skiing.”

“The only limits on kids are what we put on them,” Soistman added. His daughter started cross-country skiing when she was 18 months old.

“The ones who win in skiing have the biggest smiles,” he concludes. “Skiing is the most fun you can have standing up.”

Kathy Sarns, who heads the KNSC Junior Nordic Program has seen the effect of the Banner Club – others.

“Everyone that donates to Junior Nordic and KNSC are helping to create a healthier community,” she said.

“Teaching kids to ski is a snowball effect (pardon the pun) and when kids learn to cross-country ski, then the whole family and often friends join in, too. Nordic Skiing helps make Alaskan winters more fun for everyone. Thank you to all the donors to KNSC and Junior Nordic!"
Blue sky and big smile day for Erin Johnson Memorial Race

There was lots of sunshine, smiles and hugs among the 136 skiers and their supporters at Beach Lake Trails on Feb. 24 to honor the memory of Erin Johnson in the annual Erin Johnson Memorial Ski the Beach race. The race is a fundraiser for the Erin K. Johnson Memorial Fund, which supports projects that get young people outdoors. The foundation honors Erin Johnson, a 27-year-old geologist from Eagle River who was killed by a bear in 2017. Erin skied for Mirror Lake, then Chugiak High, and was an accomplished backcountry skier.

The event featured skiers dressed in costumes – including an octopus and a scuba diver! Top finishers included Rich Suddock (15K men), Lauren Fritz (15K women), Max Beiergrohslein (7K men), Sherly Stevens (7K women), Ian Calwell (3K boys), Sadie Johnson (3K girls), Gil Car (3K tour men), Liz Turner (3K tour women), Carson Humphrey (1K boys), Torynn Koloski (1K girls), Jesse Bee (1K tour men) and Vivian Williamson (1K tour women). For more information on the foundation, visit erinkjohnson.com.

Summer’s coming: get ready for volunteer trail work

CERNSC is preparing for summer trail work this summer after a slow period. We’re planning to use volunteers this summer to make Beach Lake trails look even better. Work will include tree cutting, dirt haling and fixing up Meander. Our overall plan is to work with NSAA and Parks & Rec to get new, smooth out the trails.

Aloha and happy swimming/skiing to everyone who was ready to celebrate skiing and a good friend at the Erin Johnson Memorial Ski the Beach Race on Feb. 24.

reduced the ruts and fix the Meander bridge.

When the work schedule is finalized, we will send out a group email for volunteers!

Hannah Rowland skied the Eagle River tour around Peters Creek at 39 weeks pregnant, demonstrating how skiing can keep you fit and happy in all life stages.
A season of hot programs, hot temps and hot news

BY ERIC TROYER

We’ve had quite a season! We started things off with some changes to the Birch Hill grounds, waiting for the snow to come (it finally did), had to muscle through some cold temps before things got warm (too warm!), and closed out with an all-Birch Hill Sonot Kkaazoot and some amazing news from Quebec.

Changes at Birch Hill

We started the season with an expanded parking lot that extended on the backside of the old equipment building. We also got a new Terrain Park that replaced the old Terrain Garden (which was demolished when the parking lot was put in). The Terrain Park was greeted with a big thumbs up, though some more work is planned to get it just right. The new parking lot was also a big hit, especially when the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot was held entirely at Birch Hill.

Late snow

Sufficient snow took its time in coming, and the trails at Birch Hill didn’t become skiing-only until November 11. (Many fat bikes were seen racing around up until then.) But it finally came and just in time, so that we were able to hold the Alaska Coffee Roasting Company Turkey Day Relays. Phew! It had gotten so bad that the groomers were threatening a trip to Hawaii, arguing that was the only sure way to bring the snow!

More snow came and we were able to settle down into our regular rhythm of fundraisers, programs, races, and other events, such as the Freeze Up Funk Fest, Ski Fest, the Wentz Orthodontics Ski Your Age, the Candy Cane Romp, and Backcountry Film Festival.

Cold temps, then too warm

Temperatures got cold and the Goldstream Sports Candelight Ski had to be postponed and a ski tour of the Chena Lake Recreation Area was cancelled.

Temps finally warmed up, but then they got too warm! The skiing started melting too soon. As a result, the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkazoot was shortened and held entirely at Birch Hill. Nobody seemed to mind much, though. Several people skied in shorts and/or a tank top (or less)! The parking lot was also a big hit, especially when the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot was held entirely at Birch Hill.

Incredible racing season

You can’t really talk about this racing season without mentioning 16-year-old Kendall Kramer—a lot! Kramer, an FXC athlete, dominated the final World Cup races in Quebec, possibly being the youngest American Nordic skier ever at that level.

Fairbanksan Shalane Frost also made a mark by setting a new female ski record for the White Mountains 100 held in the White Mountains National Recreation Area north of Fairbanks. She also came in second where she placed as high as fourth! She swept the U18 events at Junior Nationals and was invited to ski in the final World Cup races in Quebec, possibly being the youngest American Nordic skier ever at that level.

Young skiers compete and have fun in the final day of the ConocoPhillips Interior Youth Festival in March at Birch Hill Recreation Area.
Donald Wade: Sharing his hard-earned love of skiing

How are you involved with the NSCF?
I have been involved with NSCF for over five years. I help coach the Junior Nordic skiers throughout the winter and volunteer my time for the town races and other events.

How long have you been a cross-country skier?
I have been involved with NSCF for over five years. I have never been involved in a winter sport before because I grew up in the desert and had seen snow maybe once in a blue moon.

I took on the challenge to learn how to ski when my daughter started Junior Nordics so I could ski with her. Not having any background in winter sports or cross-country skiing, it seemed a bit overwhelming at first, i.e., long trails, huge hills, and getting passed by the zoomies!

My wife Shelly gave me a quick lesson on how to cross-country ski. Like many husbands, I did not heed to my wife's expert advice. I hated it. I threw my skis down the hill and walked back to the hut. There was something that was so unnatural and uncoordinated to me about sliding on two tiny sticks attached to my feet.

Time went on. I pushed myself every day during winter to learn how to ski, eventually picking it up naturally after a few weeks, and came to enjoy it for a workout during winter.

What do you like about cross-country skiing?
For those of you who know my daughter Olivia, you may question if she does anything but ski. "Yup," I reply! I have even asked her that same question, but I usually ask: "What do you think about when you ski?" Her reply: "Nothing! Nothing at all!" Which she said with a funny smirk on her face!

When I started I was filled with anxiety about doing the same thing. Now when skiing, I feel it. Not care about anything other than the quiet swooshing of your skis putting your mind and body at rest from the fast-paced life. I wish I had known this at last place if I ever do a race. Ultimately, I know what nothing means now. It's a way to get exercise and to get rid of the winter blues. But it's also a way to connect with nature in a different setting, to enjoy a natural, self-powered way to get out and see areas quietly, to zoom around trails, get some stress relief, and enjoy the nicest people out on the trails doing the same thing. Now when skiing, I feel it. Not care about anything other than the quiet swooshing of your skis putting your mind and body at rest from the fast-paced life. I wish I had known this at 10 years old, like Olivia. I would have a few less grey hairs starting.

NSCF proves that you can take a sport and turn it into a lifestyle, connecting local businesses and sponsorships to families, skiers, and racers. Creating a connection to community for all types of skiers, whether it is racing or just a lifestyle sport.

I value the importance of skiing. I like to give back to the club by helping coach the Junior Nordic kids and teach them that there is more to skiing than just learning how to ski and race. Skiing has taught me a whole different way to kick through life, but now there is at times some glide that comes with it.

Where do you like to cross-country ski and why?
This is the hardest question to answer. There are so many great trail systems in the Fairbanks area to ski, but if I had to pick one it would be Birch Hill. From the world-class trails to the best-groomed trails in the state. I would have to say the facilities at Birch Hill, the trails, and the people who ski there make it my favorite place to ski.

When and why did you move to Fairbanks? What do you like about living in Fairbanks?
I moved here more than 10 years ago. I always wanted to live in Alaska, and finally I had an opportunity to transfer up here through my job. Half my life I have been living in a hot desert. I had had enough! So I chose to move to the opposite spectrum of Mother Nature. Ten years later, I feel it has been the best move of my life. So much can be said about our community and lifestyle here.

The Spring Gala at Birch Hill: Dancing, dining, and so much more

BY ERIC TROYER

Take off those ski boots, hang up your ski poles, and dance into the sunlight! The Annual Spring Gala is once again coming to Birch Hill.

The Gala will be held at the Birch Hill Cross-Country Ski Center on Saturday, April 27, starting at 6 p.m. Live music will be provided by the Day/ Nite band, and the floor will be open for dancing. There will be a complimentary taco bar. Beer/wine will be available at the bar for a donation.

A silent auction will be held throughout the evening, and a dessert auction adds to the fun. The silent auction has many items – some ski-related, many not. All proceeds of the event go to FXC, the junior race-training program of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks.

Tickets are $20 and can be purchased at the door or from an FXC skier. Organizers are still accepting donations for the silent auction. If you have any items or services you would like to donate for this great cause, please contact Jen Delamere (fxc-ski@gmail.com).

The Gala is a spring social put on by the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. It celebrates the end of a successful season of cross-country skiing in Fairbanks and raises money for a great cause. While FXC is a race-training program, it’s about more than racing. The program’s young athletes benefit from a variety of experiences including goal setting, confidence building, and learning to live healthy lives. To make FXC available to many families, tuition rates are kept as low as possible through fundraising efforts such as the Spring Gala.
Chris Puchner: Diehard downhill convert to cross-country

I was born and mostly grew up in Ketchum, Idaho. As the son of an alpine ski instructor and former racer, I started skiing around the time I learned to walk. Parental influence extended to my becoming a Nordic skier, as well.

In a particularly poor snow year for alpine skiing, my dad started cross-country skiing again. He had competed while growing up in Wisconsin. When I visited him in 2000, I was still a diehard alpine and backcountry skier and alpine coach. Nevertheless, I accepted an invitation from him to go cross-country skiing.

Initially, it was an avenue for me to spend time with him outdoors, but I quickly discovered that this type of skiing was great for aerobic exercise in the winter. I also learned that it is fun, much easier to stay warm, and particularly well suited to Fairbanks, where lit trails lend themselves to skiing during the week after work!

I first came to Alaska on a climbing trip in 1976, and realized that this is where I wanted to live and work. So, not long after receiving my geology degree, I found a job in mineral exploration based in Anchorage and moved to Alaska in 1980. Having grown up and enjoyed living in a small town, I didn’t hesitate to move to Fairbanks in 1986 when offered fieldwork based here. I joined the NSCF board when I retired in 2018 out of a desire to help serve an organization dedicated to advancing a sport I love.
place overall for skiers. (And just so you know, that’s 100 miles, not 100 kilometers!) Our junior race-training program, NSCF FXC, qualified its largest ever team to compete in the Junior Nationals and came back with many podium finishes and personal accomplishments. It finished JNs as fifth for Overall Club. The program continues to amaze. And some of our younger skiers traveled to Wyoming to compete in the Intermountain Division Youth Championships, also doing an outstanding job.

We had another great season of races, including the Buotow Dental-Pangaea Health Distance Series, KINROSS/Fort Knox Town Race Series, the Wednesday Night Series, and the Skiklathon, the final two Besh Cups, the Region VI and State High School Championships, and the ConocoPhillips Interior Youth Festival, as well as the Turkey Day Relays and Sonot Kkaxoot, already mentioned.

Biathlon grows

Our biathlon program continues to grow. It held lots of practices and closed out the season by hosting the Nenana Invitational. Rifles and skis. That sounds so Fairbanks!

Not just racing

But our club is not just about racing and our programs proved that throughout the season. Junior Nordics had another strong season, as did Adult Lessons. We had several tours. And, of course, our incredible Peoors kept the Birch Hill trails in great shape for anyone who wanted to use them, whether racing or just going for a relaxing ski. (Don’t forget to donate to the Trails Fund!).

WRAPUP

Continued from Page 13

For example, looking back on the season, it’s clear that we have many, many thank yous to hand out. Volunteers and ski club staff members have done an incredible job, as they do every year. It’s absolutely amazing how much can get done and how many people can have such a great time on skis because of our volunteers and staff.

So, thank you to everyone who help make this club so successful. We have a ton of events that help people stay active throughout the winter, including races, tours, lessons, and socials. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough room here to list even all the events much less the people who helped make them happen. Please know how much we appreciate you!

**OFF THE TRAIL**

Eight frequently asked questions about the skiing-to-running transition

BY ZUZANA ROGERS, PT, SCD, ACSM

Advanced Physical Therapy

As we reach the end of the cross-country skiing season and the last issue of the Alaska Nordic Skier, I want to thank you all for your kind comments throughout the season. I am glad I had the opportunity to guide you and hopefully help you navigating through aches and pains throughout the season.

In this issue, I want to answer some frequently asked questions that I encounter as a clinical physical therapist working primarily with active populations.

1. I am a skier who will be starting running/track and field season soon. How do I get ready?

   Make sure to ‘pre-condition’ your body. Your tendons, ligaments, muscles, joints, and your body as a whole need to be conditioned to become resilient to the load of running and jumping. Start with light outside runs on level surfaces and progress to hills. Gradually add plyometrics. You should be able to jump rope and/or hill bound without soreness before the track season starts.

2. Do I need to strengthen?

   YES! YES! Cross-training and strength training will make you a stronger, healthier and less injury prone runner. Low and non-impact sports like cycling and swimming will help you build supporting muscles used in running and skiing, but you should also strengthen your feet to work for you the way they were designed.

3. When should I replace running shoes?

   The rule states that you should replace running shoes every 400-500 miles. However, pay attention to the wear pattern – if the shoe is showing uneven wear (heel, toe, outside or inside surface), replace them. Buy a new pair and rotate them for a while. Don’t wait until your only pair is trashed.

4. *This is too much wear!!*

   How do I select my running shoes?

   Select shoes based on fit comfort, your foot shape, and the activity/terrain you will be using them in. The best shoe for you is the one that fits well. Minimalist shoes tend to shift load towards your ankle, Achiles, and foot, while maximalist shoes (such as HOKAs) shift the load to the knees, hips, and low back. If your forehead is wide, opt for wide toe box shoes such as Altra, New Balance (they come in several widths) and similar. If your calves run tight and/or you are dealing with Achilles issues, opt for raised heel (higher drop shoes). But the most importantly, make sure you are properly fitted with your shoes – visit your local running store that can do that for you.

5. I have Achilles pain – how long should I rest it?

   Complete rest for Achilles tendopathy does not work that great. First of all, try to figure out why your Achilles is talking to you – did you increase your training too much? Started running hills? Changes shoes? If the condition is acute, especially if you feel swelling, it is OK to use ice, but only temporarily (two days max). To protect you Achilles while it recovers, try temporarily adding a slight heel lift to your shoe. Don’t stretch, but you can foam roll your calf. Best of all – talk to your PT! A skilled Physical Therapist will be able to help you navigate through your recovery.

6. My feet pronate – should I use arch supports?

   It depends! I am generally opposed to a rigid arch support unless the foot needs to be mecanically corrected. More often, overpronation can happen due to specific weakness and muscle imbalance. It can also be genetic. Pronation is not bad – there is some degree of pronation that needs to happen for optimal foot function during walking and running. A great remedy for pronated feet is foot strength! Allow your feet to work for you the way they were designed.

7. How should I increase my running mileage to minimize injury risk?

   The rule of thumb is to increase your load (mileage, change of terrain) by about 10% per week. However, if you are starting from low mileage and doing OK with it, you can increase by more that 10% per week. Conversely, if your mileage is already high, add less that 10% per week and focus on recovery to get better.

8. Should I exercise through pain?

   Generally, some discomfort is OK. If the discomfort resolves within 24 hours, you can continue to train. If it lasts more than 24 hours, back off. The pain may be due to too much load too soon.

   I wish you a safe and enjoyable end of ski season and beginning of running season! Feel free to contact me with questions. Otherwise, see you on the trails!