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the ALASKA nordic skier

OCTOBER 2018, VOL.20, NO.1

PHOTO BY **OPHIRA GROUP**/INSTAGRAM: @OPHIRAGROUP

ANCHORAGE:
The season of skiing and celebrating has arrived!
2

GIRDWOOD:
Happy 10th anniversary to our awesome club
9

FAIRBANKS:
Upgrades for Birch Hill terrain park, parking lot
14, 16

Anchorage 2
Eagle River. 10
Fairbanks. 13
Girdwood 9
Kachemak 11
Statewide 8

Anchorage Nordic Skier
Newsletter Of The Nordic Skiing Association Of Anchorage, Inc.

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Summer work sets the foundation for a special season ahead

Message from NSAA Board and Staff

Greetings Alaska Nordic community. It's been a busy summer!

NSAA's staff and board have been working hard this offseason. Some of the summer highlights included hiring our new NSAA program manager, updating NSAA's HR policies and employee handbook, troubleshooting and fixing the snowmaking equipment at Kincaid Park, completing the sound system upgrade at Kincaid, working with our awesome biathlon community to restructure our Biathlon program. And our annual equipment maintenance went well, along with working with partnering with the Municipality on trail sign design and implementation.

Please mark your calendars and join us in planning for Junior Nationals in March 2019! This large event comes to Anchorage every 10 years and will welcome over 450 top Junior skiers from around the nation, and, of course, Alaska. Please visit our website to volunteer!

Many of you have already renewed your membership and picked a trail support level. Thank you! We are as excited about this season as you are!

Our staff continues to work hard reaching those in our community, many who are not aware that the NSAA maintains the trails they bike, run and hike on regularly. So this summer, NSAA reached out and had a presence at the Gold Nugget Triathlon, Anchorage's Bike to Work Day and the Mayor's Midnight Sun Marathon, and can also be seen on an insert with your Anchorage Water and Wastewater utility bill.

Looking for equipment? Save the date for NSAA's annual Ski Swap on October 28. Looking for fun with your Nordic community? Save the date for NSAA's festive season kickoff, celebrating Nordic sport with Olympians, on November 4.

We look forward to seeing you on the trails and volunteering at the many NSAA events this season!

AROUND THE BOWL

Support healthy lifestyles, Anchorage's trails and NSAA by becoming a member!

The Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage membership season runs from October 1- September 30, which means right now is the time to register for the new season! If you run, bike, walk, dog walk or ski on Anchorage trails, please contribute today and join NSAA's family of trail supporters. NSAA is not supported by tax dollars; we rely on generous support from trail users like you for year-round trail maintenance!

Benefits of NSAA membership include:

1. Your donation ensures that NSAA can continue maintaining and grooming over 150 kilometers of trails, as well as make snow at Kincaid Park. 2. Your donation is 100 percent tax-deductible! 3. You'll stay connected to the Nordic skiing community. 4. You'll receive a decal to proudly display on your car, as well as additional small gifts to thank you for your support of NSAA!

Trail memberships start at just $35. Register today at www.anchoragenordicski.com/membership or use the form in this issue of the Alaska Nordic Skier.

For information about gifts by bequest, planned gift, retirement assets, appreciated securities or other legacy giving, please contact the NSAA office at 276-7609.

Swap, sell, save at the NSAA Ski Swap on October 28

Save the date for the NSAA Ski Swap, which arrives on Sunday, October 28, at the Kincaid Park Bunker. The always popular event takes place from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, with gear drops happening from 6-8 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday. All unsold gear must be picked up from 5-7 p.m. Sunday.

Register all gear in advance online at www.flashconsign.com. Learn more and sign up to volunteer at www.anchoragenordicski.com/events/nsaa-ski-swap/. Event volunteers get a 30-minute preview of all gear!

NSAA Season Kick-Off

Join NSAA staff and volunteers, along with fellow skiers and community members, for the annual party to ring in the new season! The NSAA Season Kickoff arrives Sunday, November 4, at the Kincaid Park Chalet. The expo runs from 2:30-4 p.m., followed by the potluck and 4 and the kickoff at 5. Grab an adult beverage as you check out local businesses and ski programs at the expo, peruse items at the silent auction, and enjoy the always delicious smorgasbord potluck.

Learn more about the event and volunteer opportunities at anchoragenordicski.com/events/annual-celebration.

NSAA Junior Nordic ramping up for another great season

Mark your calendars! NSAA Junior Nordic registration begins October 1 with the season's first session beginning Monday, November 26. Anchorage Junior Nordic is Alaska's largest and longest-running cross-country program for kids. With three different locations, you can find the location that suites your family best. Remember, some locations fill up fast so signup today at anchoragenordicski.com/junior-nordic/.

The season's first session runs from November 26 to January 12, 2019; the second session runs from January 14 to March 9. After-school practice time at Kincaid and Hillside from 4:30-5:30 p.m. for beginner skiers, meeting at the regular time on Saturdays.

Jr. Nordic is always looking for coaches! If you're interested, please visit the coaching website: anchoragenordicski.com/junior-nordic-coaching.

Get with the good times at the AMH Anchorage Cup series

The AMH Anchorage Cup community ski race series had a great season last year with 20 percent more skiers joining the fun! Each AMH Anchorage Cup event is family fun designed for skiers of all ages and skill levels, and includes a loop for youth skiers. This season's series features five events; races begin at noon, sign up online (anchoragenordicski.com/races/amhanchorage-cup-series) or register the morning of the event.

Back by popular demand: Kids race their first event for free! There will also be a 5K community ski wave at each event and a ski racing introduction at the first event on

See **AROUND THE BOWL**, Page 3

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Karen Compton and Vivienne Murray

SKI TRAIN
Travis Taylor

SOLSTICE TREE TOUR
Sara Miller

SPECIAL EVENTS AND RACING
Lauri Bassett

TOUR OF ANCHORAGE
Matias Saari

NSAA OFFICE HOURS
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday

BOARD MEETINGS
Fourth Thursday of the month, 6:15 P.M. at BP Energy Center or NSAA office. Open to all.

NSAA Members of the Month: The Witmer 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. October's NSAA Members of the Month are Frank and Erin Witmer (and their family!), who have been Nordic skiers for a combined 70 years across all family members (impressive!), and have been involved with NSAA for around 30 years, including the last four years with the immediate family.

NSAA: What do you love about Nordic skiing?

Low-impact, high-intensity exercise that keeps you warm all winter long!

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

We love the trails, grooming, community events, and ski jumps!

What does NSAA's mission mean to you?

It is about bringing the community together to support and use an incredible resource (e.g., the trails and ski jumps) in our backyard.

Can you share a standout moment from connecting with NSAA and its programs and events?

Two of us just started ski jumping in September, and one of those is over 40 years of age! Erin organized Ski 4 Kids during the 2017-2018 season and was thrilled to see it all come together successfully. It's wonderful to see our kids get excited for Junior Nordic (especially the gummy bears), even when the temperatures are in the single digits.

AROUND THE BOWL

Continued from Page 2

December 9.

This year's series consists of:

Sunday, December 9 — Hillside Classic, Hillside Park – co-hosted with Alaska Winter Stars. Soup provided!

Sunday, January 13 — Hickok Duathlon, Kincaid Park – co-hosted with APU Nordic Ski Team. Soup provided!

Sunday, January 27 — AMH Classic, Kincaid Park – co-sponsored with Mooses Tooth

Sunday, February 10 — Sprint Relay, Kincaid Park – co-hosted with Junior Nordic

Sunday, February 17 — Sven Johansson, Kincaid Park – co-sponsored with Skinny Raven. Potluck!

A portal to maximizing your membership

Check out the NSAA Findjoo Member Portal at **anchoragenordicski.com/membership/**. Login to your NSAA Member Portal to see current and past registrations, update personal info, change password and resend email confirmations!

Prepare for a tree-mendous time at the Solstice Tree Tour

This is Anchorage's most exciting way to celebrate Winter Solstice! On December 16, 2018, tour around the Mize Loop at Kincaid to see organization and company sponsored trees decorated to perfection. This is the third annual celebration and it's going to be the best yet. If you are interested in sponsoring a tree or volunteering for the event, please contact Sara Miller at aksarammiller@gmail.com.

Save the date, participate and volunteer at NSAA events!

SKI FOR WOMEN

February 3, 2019 — The wildly popular and powerful Alaska Ski for Women will be held Sunday, February 3. Volunteers are needed! Register, volunteer and learn more at **anchoragenordicski.com/events/alaska-ski-for-women/.**

SKI 4 KIDS

February 23, 2019 — It's never too early to get local kids excited for Ski 4 Kids. This is a fun-filled day with indoor and outdoor activities for kids and families. Register today at **anchoragenordicski.com/events/ski-4-kids**.

TOUR OF ANCHORAGE

March 3, 2019 — Same great race. Same great after-party! Get the details at **anchoragenordicski.com/races/tour-of-anchorage.**

SKI TRAIN

March 23, 2019 — Don't miss the fun when Ski Train leaves the station! Tickets go on sale October 1; join NSAA and buy your Ski Train tickets at **anchoragenordicski.com/events/ski-trai**n. New at the upcoming Ski Train – all booth seating and themed cars and a handful of new partners providing exciting perks.

OCTOBER

Monday, October 1 — NSAA membership season begins; event registration begins

Monday, October 1 — NSAA Biathlon programs online sign–up

Monday, October 1 — NSAA Junior Nordic online sign–up

Monday, October 1 —NSAA Ski Jumping online sign–up

Monday, October 1 — NSAA Ski Train tickets go on sale

Friday, October 26 — NSAA Ski Swap gear drop–off

Sunday, October 28 — NSAA Ski Swap, Kincaid Park

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 4 — NSAA Season Kickoff, Kincaid Park

Thursday, November 15 — NSAA Junior Nordic equipment pick–up

Monday, November 26 — NSAA Junior Nordic Session 1 starts

TBA — NSAA Ski Jumping begins

TBA — NSAA Backcountry Tour: 20th annual Turkey Day Shakeoff, Hatcher Pass

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

the ALASKA nordic skier

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On the cover *– APU Nordic Ski Center athletes scored some summer skiing fun, and tough training, on Eagle Glacier above Girdwood. Photo by Ophira Group/ Instagram: @ophiragroup*

NSAA Partner Spotlight: Trek Store of Anchorage

Trek, trails and tracks – a perfect combo! So is the partnership between Trek Store of Anchorage and NSAA. Bill Fleming is no stranger to Anchorage, nor to Anchorage's trail system. As an avid biker and owner of Trek Store of Anchorage, he admits he hasn't skied in years, but he acknowledges the ski-bike connection: trails. Giving credit to NSAA, he says, "there's no doubt that mountain bikers benefit today from the trails that NSAA built years ago."

One of Bill's favorite memories is regularly skiing the Jodhpur Loop at Kincaid Park as a kid with his dad. He remembers the NSAA slogan from years ago: trails don't fall from the sky. Instilled at an early age, Bill recognized the value of ski trails, and getting outside with family regularly. He also has fond memories of trips to Grandview on NSAA's Ski Train.

In recent years, Bill has become a loyal NSAA partner on many levels. It started out as casual conversations with NSAA staff seeking advice on how to connect better with the community. It's since grown to so much more. Three years in a row, Trek has donated a fat tire bike to NSAA, with all raffle proceeds supporting Anchorage's trails. As a proud NSAA Ski Train sponsor, they have also provided demo bikes for Ski Train participants in Curry.

Bill says that NSAA's vision is complementary to mountain bikers: sustain trails year-round and encourage healthy living. In Bill's words, "supporting the Nordic community just feels good."

We are so appreciative of Bill and the Trek Store of Anchorage.

Big air and big changes for NSAA Ski Jumping program

Big changes are coming to the Ski Jumping/Nordic Combined program. After building and growing the program for several years, coaches Zak Hammill and Natasha Mattoon are taking time off to travel.

They will be replaced by two former national team members, Adam Loomis and Chris Lamb, who will coach the upcoming winter session as well as the 2019 summer and fall sessions.

Adam was born and raised in Eau Claire, Wisc. He spent most of his childhood with skis on his feet and was introduced to the sport of Nordic Combined at the age of 10. His career has gradually brought him farther west, beginning with Steamboat Springs, Colo., where he spent his summers training as a high schooler. After graduating, Adam made the full move to Steamboat, where he trained for two years with the Junior National team. Just after turning 20, Adam was named to the U.S. Nordic Combined Team and was asked to move to Park City to be with the rest of the team. He recently retired from the sport, ending a career that brought him all over Europe, occasionally to Asia, and to two Nordic World Championships.

While training and competing, Adam chipped away at his college education with online classes at DeVry University. He graduated with a Business Administration degree in 2017.

Loomis

Lamb

Since ending his competitive career, Adam has been staying active in the mountains - whether on skis, foot or a bike.

Chris Lamb is a New Hampshire native and former USA Ski Jumping Team member. He attended the National Sports Academy in Lake Placid, NY, from 2003-2007 and competed as a national team member from 2007-2014.

During his career, Chris was named to three Junior World Championship teams, achieved several podium finishes at National Championships, scored points in Continental Cups in Europe, and made the podium in several FIS Cup competitions, including two victories in Brattleboro, VT. The last three years of Chris's career were spent living in Trondheim, Norway, where he was a member of the Tronderhopp ski club and trained with many of Norway's top athletes and coaches.

Chris's time in Norway has provided him with a top-level education in ski jumping fundamentals: technique, physical and mental conditioning, etc. Since ending his career in 2014, Chris has completed a bachelor's degree in philosophy and environmental studies at Marlboro College in Vermont, and he hopes to go on to teach higher education. He has coached periodically in Lake Placid since 2014. His personal distance record is 191.5 meters.

Both coaches are excited to be new members of Team AK, where they'll share their knowledge, experiences and passion with the next generation of Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined athletes.

Learn more about NSAA's Ski Jumping program at **anchoragenordicski.com/ski-jumping/.**

NSAA's 2018-19 Season Program and Event Directors

The NSAA is proud to introduce this season's program and event directors, old and new. The "old" are gearing up for another great season and the "new" are charging into the season with enthusiasm. You should recognize a few familiar faces and when you see them on the trails, please thank them for all that they do!

Part of what makes NSAA great is the variety of programs and events it fuels and offers. The program and event directors provide the Anchorage area with substantial variety of events that encourages everyone to get outside and on the snow. NSAA thanks each and every director for their passion and dedication!

This year's program and event directors include those shown at right and listed below:

AMH Anchorage Cup — Branden Fontana

Backcountry Tours — Mary Vavrik, Karlene Leeper and Ken DePalma

Ski 4 Kids — Erin Whitney Witmer

Ski Jumping — Karen Compton and Vivienne Murray

Learn more about NSAA's programs, events and volunteer opportunities at **anchoragenordicski.com**.

Middle School Racing — Diane Moxness

Tour of Anchorage — Matias Saari

Solstice Tree Tour — Sara Miller

Junior Nordic — Shannon Donley (shown with family)

Besh Cup — Anson Moxness

High School Racing — Buzz Scher

Scholarships — Dan Rosenberg

SKAN 24 — Geoff and Cathy Wright

Alaska Ski for Women — Jenny Di Grappa

Special Events and Racing — Lauri Bassett

Biathlon — Joey Caterinichio, interim

Ski Train — Travis Taylor

SPONSORED

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.

FIRETAP
ALEHOUSE / RESTAURANT
THE SHOPS AT O'MALLEY

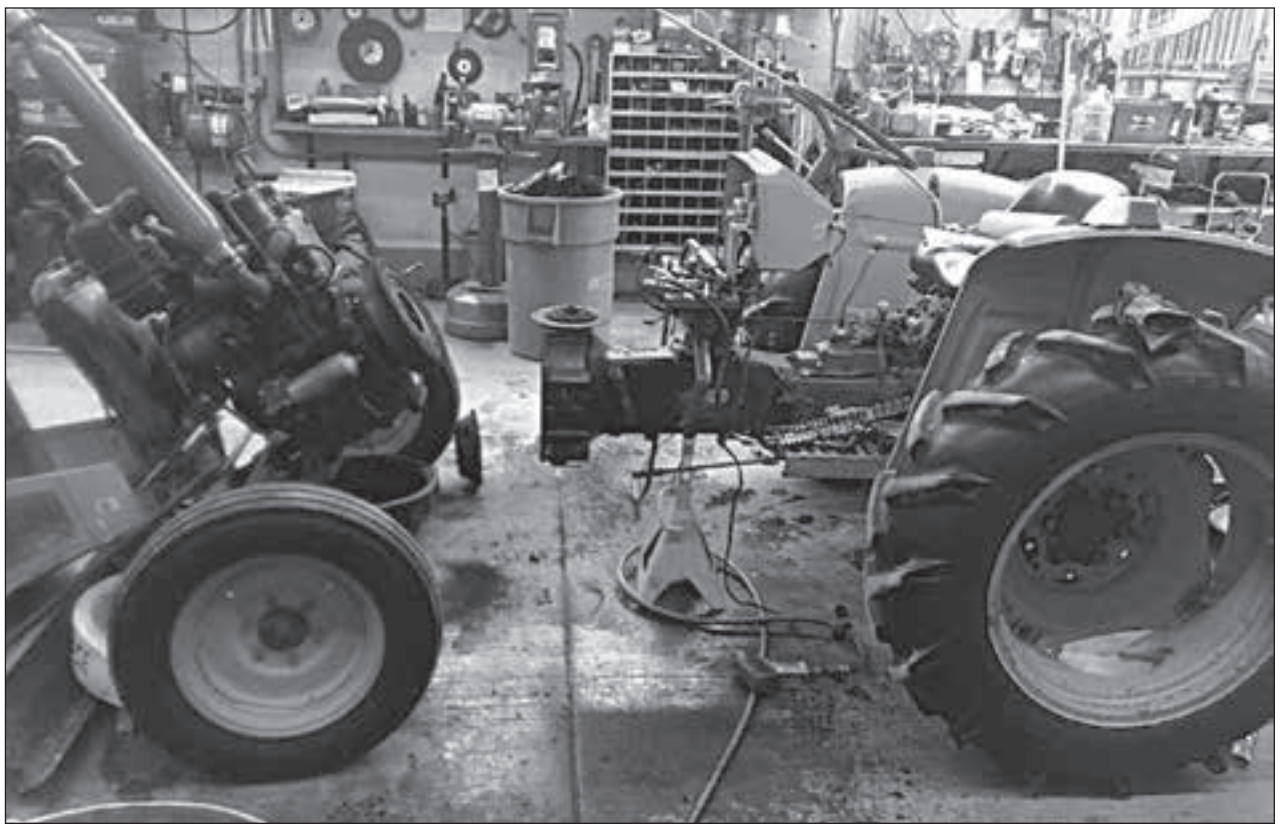
Firetap is conveniently located at 10950 O'Malley Centre Drive, near the corner of Old Seward Highway and O'Malley Road. Call ahead to order your food or pizza to-go at **(907) 561-2337**, then grab a growler and/or some wine. The menu is online at **firetapalehouse.com**.

No off-season for NSAA's Operations team

This summer we caught up on some housekeeping and machine maintenance.

The yard behind the Bunker was getting pretty cramped so we rented an excavator and started with the demolition of the old, rotten Biathlon building. After disposing of that, we loaded and hauled thousands of pounds of scrap steel to the recycler bringing in a surprising amount of money since the price of steel is up (think tariffs). We are still figuring out how to dispose of a lot of parts and equipment that are of no use to us but too valuable to throw away. On a sad note, we said farewell to the old 1976 International slide back truck. We had considered fixing it but some engine parts are no longer available. As a memento, we kept its instrument cluster to hang on the wall because it has a very "classic" look.

We also spent a fair amount of time this summer catching up on maintenance. On the snow cat fleet, we replaced some primary hydraulic lines, seals, oils and filters and dealt with many other issues in need of attention. While these repairs may seem straightforward, these parts are frequently in hard-to-reach places leading to colorful language, stiff necks and really dirty coveralls. Both slide-back trucks needed some love and are now good to go. We then coordinated with the MOA Parks and Recreation to clean out the old pump building so that we could use it for storing the fan guns for snowmaking. There were just a ton of smaller jobs/ repairs that made their way through the shop.



Kubota gets a new clutch!

Just recently, we dug up a snowmaking hydrant on the biathlon range that had been leaking. The actual valve is almost 13 feet in the ground to protect it from freezing. This one had cracked so we replaced and pressure checked it. To do this we rented another, bigger excavator, a trench box, an air compressor and an air knife to do the digging without hitting the buried utilities. The repair went well and we owe a big thank you to Tim Brabetts for helping to facilitate the work.

Of course, there are always downed trees on all the trails systems that need clearing, lots of mowing, and overall preparation for the next season. Can't wait for the snow and we'll see you on the trails!

Farewell old friend …

Fixing the snowmaking hydrant at Kincaid Park.

Advertise here and your business can reach skiers across the state.

the ALASKA nordic skier

Meet Sara Kamahele, NSAA's new Program Manager

NSAA's new Program Manager, Sara Kamahele, has hit the ground running. She joined the team in September and is excited to continue the great NSAA tradition of providing quality trails, programs and events to keep our community healthy and active.

Having grown up in Junior Nordic, Sara is not new to NSAA and says she fondly remembers the cookie tour and all the miles she skied to earn her Hawk jacket, like so many others. Sara says she learned early the value of hard work and persistence from the Nordic community. After racing in Besh Cups and for Bartlett High, she felt support from the organization and the local ski community as an NSAA scholarship recipient. Being a part of the NSAA staff now seems like a natural progression.

If you get a chance, introduce yourself to Sara. She's excited to meet the many faces of the volunteers, supporters, and participants that keep this organization going.

The gift of a getaway

Thanks to longtime NSAA volunteers and members Gordon and Linda Wetzel, NSAA is excited to announce another cabin destination for its Nordic ski club members. The Wetzels have recently gifted their Nancy Lakes property to NSAA, sharing with us a special family getaway for many years and memories with their kids and grandkids.

Gordon, a former NSAA board president, has been passionate about the skiing community for many years and wanted to leave this beautiful property for many more to use. He and Linda have relocated to the Lower 48 to be closer with family but plan to visit again.

Thank you, Wetzel family, for sharing this precious gift with your Nordic family! Members will soon be able to rent the Wetzels' cabin for outdoor adventures.

Gordon and Linda Wetzel present their generous gift to NSAA and its members.

2018-2019 NSAA Membership

Learn more at www.anchoragenordicski.com

About NSAA

For 54 years, NSAA has maintained and sustained Anchorage's world-class trail system and promoted Nordic skiing through events and programs that encourage healthy lifestyles for Alaskans.

NSAA does not receive **any funding** from taxpayer dollars. Winter grooming and year-round trail maintenance are possible because of generous individual giving from trail users like you!

Thank you for supporting NSAA!

Levels of Support

	Single	Family
☐ Trail Meister	$350+	$700+
☐ Trail Blazer	$175+	$350+
☐ Trail Partner	$_____ per month	
Support NSAA year-round!		
☐ Trail User	$85+	$170+
☐ Trail Member	$35+	$70+

Additional donation: $ _____

Total Enclosed: $_____

Check for the following:

☐ Decal

☐ Paper Newsletter (default is email version)

☐ I'll pick up trail pins at the NSAA office/NSAA event, or at AMH, Trek Bicycle Store, Skinny Raven or The Hoarding Marmot

☐ Please mail my trail pins

Trail Blazers, Meisters, Partners: Choose one below

☐ NSAA Headband (while supplies last)

☐ Surprise me! (vintage NSAA gift, while supplies last)

Name: _____

Email: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Spouse/Partner Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____)_____ Children: _____

For information about gifts by bequest, planned gift, retirement assets, appreciated securities or other legacy giving, contact the NSAA Office.

I have read and understand the Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement, and Media Permission (see reverse)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Make checks payable to NSAA. We accept Visa, MC, Discover, AMEX

Card #: _____-_____-_____-_____

Exp. Date: _____ - _____ CVV/Code: _____ Signature: _____

Tax ID#23-7232617. 203 W 15th Ave, Suite 204, Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: 907-276-7609

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Hunting for Olympians – Sharp shooters and fast skiers train all summer for winter success

BY TORSTEN RENNER AND KEITH CONGER

This spring, athletes from across Alaska had the unique opportunity to train with one of the most successful biathletes in the United States, Tim Burke. Tim recently retired from the World Cup Circuit and four Olympic Winter Games, then jumped straight into his new career as development coach. His first job assignment was to come up to Alaska and coach the annual Spring Biathlon Camp, while seeking out new talent.

The camp was offered biathletes in Alaska and beyond, including Swiss World Junior medalist Amy Baserga. The camp consisted of ski and shooting technique sessions, as well and motivational seminars and presentations from ski Olympian Holly Brooks and ski team physical therapist Zuzana Rogers. It was a stimulating environment that made everyone present want to pick up a rifle and ski. Additionally, the camp featured the largest turnout of biathletes Anchorage has ever seen, making it a successful venture and a memorable experience.

In July, Nome Nordic hosted a summer biathlon camp with 3-time Biathlon Olympian Lanny Barnes. Barnes' high energy and enthusiasm was infectious, as participants were led through many exciting drills. Barnes instructed the young athletes, including novice just learning to shoot off hand as well as Arctic Winter Games medalists. The event took place at the Sunset Biathlon Range, which at 165 degrees longitude is the westernmost biathlon range in the world.

Happy campers.
PHOTO BY **JIM PASEK**

PHOTO BY **KEITH CONGER**
Biathletes train in Nome.

Another Olympian gracing our Kincaid Park biathlon range was Gold medal winner Katy Emmons (née Kurková). Katy Emmons, a three-time Olympic medal winner in rifle shooting from Czech Republic, taught precision small bore rifle instruction at this first time USA Shooting clinic.

And not to be left behind in the races because accurate shooting is half the biathlon sport, Marine Dusser, formerly of the French National Biathlon Team partnered with Layne Lewis, University of Alaska Fairbanks head rifle coach, at a biathlon shooting clinic for the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks biathletes.

PHOTO BY **JIM PASEK**
Alaska's young biathletes are ready to roll into winter.

Summer time is when biathletes dial in their shooting game and now we wait for the snow to fall. Biathlon is the most popular viewed winter sport in Europe and the only Winter Olympic Games sport that the USA has not received a medal. Alaska is working to change that piece of history.

A lot on the line this season for Alaska's top young skiers

BY LAURI BASSETT
CCAK

The 2018-19 ConocoPhillips Besh Cup racing season will begin in December and the carrot for many of the skiers is the opportunity to ski for Team Alaska in March on the trails of Kincaid Park for the 2019 U.S. Ski & Snowboard Junior National Cross Country Championships. While traveling to other states to experience new race courses is always exciting, the advantages of staying within the Alaska time zone give skiers the opportunity to stay fresh at the end of a very busy ski season.

The Besh Cup races are for non-Team Alaska seeking skiers as well. The monthly races vary in distances, techniques, formats, and location. For the majority of skiers, the schedule consists of two sprint races, two interval start races, and two mass start races. For skiers under 14, the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks offers a ski-cross opportunity in place of one of the interval start races. The ski cross event is a spectator-friendly race of 6-8 skiers in heats that combines uphills, downhills, obstacles and jumps. Half of the races are classic technique and half of the races are freestyle technique. Anchorage is the host for the first weekend of racing. In January, the Tsalteshi Trails Association of Soldotna hosts Besh 3 & 4. The season finishes with an awards ceremony and the naming of Team Alaska in February at the Birch Hill trails of Fairbanks. Visit **crosscountryalaska.org** for specific dates and formats.

What to do now

Purchase or renew your US Ski & Snowboard license. Prices increase October 15. Besh Cup races are sanctioned by U.S. Ski & Snowboard, which requires racers to have a U.S. Ski & Snowboard membership. The choices are General or Competitive. U.S. Ski & Snowboard scores the races based on the results; and the seeding of the races is based on the cumulative scoring of U.S. Ski & Snowboard points and Besh Cup points for one calendar year. Visit the CCAK website for details on CCAK seed points. All skiers looking to make Team Alaska need to have Competitive licenses. It is a benefit for the U14 age group skiers to also select the Competitive license, as they earn U.S. Ski & Snowboard points when they race with the U16 skiers, which benefits their CCAK seed points. Skiers in the U08, U10, U12, Seniors and Masters age groups only need to purchase General licenses; though Seniors and Masters skiers also have the option to purchase Competitive licenses.

Registration opens October 1 and closes the Wednesday night prior to each race weekend. Registration rates increase by $10 for race day registration.

- $7 – U08/U10/U12
- $20 – U14
- $35 – U16 and older

There is a series discount for U16 and older skiers who register for all six races by October 31 receive one race free. Register for six – pay for five.

Besh Cup T-shirts will be given to U08, U10 and U12 skiers and all skiers who register for all six races.

Watch CCAK website and Facebook. The Competition Committee meets the Wednesday evening prior to each race weekend to finalize the details of each race.

Calling Team Alaska coaches

CCAK is accepting applications for coaches. New this year is the requirement that all applicants have a current U.S. Ski & Snowboard license and complete SafeSport training. In 2017, U.S. Ski & Snowboard adopted the Safe Sport Code; and all U.S. Ski & Snowboard coaches, officials and volunteers are required to complete background checks. Applicants for U.S. Ski & Snowboard licenses will be automatically directed to the SafeSport training program and the National Center for Safety Initiatives Website for the background check. In the past CCAK hasn't required the U.S. Ski & Snowboard license to be presented until the championships. Beginning this year all registrations must be completed prior to applying to be a Team Alaska coach. Background screening may take several weeks to be completed, so please do not delay the U.S. Ski & Snowboard coaching application process.

Submit the CCAK coaching application with your 2018-19 U.S. Ski & Snowboard coaching license information. The coaching application is available on the CCAK website.

Deadlines

October 15 — To be a Team Alaska head coach/team leader

November 1 — To be a member of Team Alaska coaching staff

Visit the CCAK website at **crosscountryalaska.org.**

Girdwood Nordic Ski Club
Girdwood, Alaska

P.O. Box 337
Girdwood, AK 99587
skigirdwood.org

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Ten Years of Creating Connection

BY DEB ESSEX

As the rest of Alaska was enjoying the fantastically sunny September (aka "Summer"), the Girdwood Nordic Ski Club was prepping trails for this upcoming winter. We spread woodchips on a notoriously sketchy downhill, finalized plans for bridge maintenance, finished the landscaping on the soon-to-be dedicated "Doug's Bridge," and most significantly, continued to propose creating additional trail connections in the Girdwood Valley. We plan to attend the Anchorage Assembly seeking assignment of a non-exclusive public use easement to construct a new 4-4-kilometer trail loop connecting to both the Moose Meadow trail loop, and Nordic parking adjacent to the current Nordic 5K Loop.

For the past six years, the Nordic Loop has been the first trail system with available groomed cross-country skiing in Girdwood … usually in November. Most of Girdwood's groomed trails are in wetlands, and they aren't safe for grooming until 18 to 24 inches of snow accumulates. Plenty of skiing takes place after the first dusting … but for more than half of the winter recreationists in Girdwood (walkers), wait for grooming. We have listened to the community, and plan to create more opportunity for winter skiing, biking, walking, etc. on trail systems that meander through the woods and connect to current access locations. We will keep you updated on our progress, so check our website and Facebook page for Anchorage Assembly dates, the latest grooming and trail updates.

This year, the Nordic Loop held five different foot races, with the most recent being the Girdwood Grizzlies hosting over 230 cross country runners at the September 17 ASD Middle School Cross Country Race. We loved seeing the runners excel on this challenging route, and have posted photos on our Facebook page. If you plan to host a race on the 5K Loop, just send us an email at info@skigirdwood.org.

In October, the GNSC will kickoff our 2018/19 season with new swag including a gold moose. This is our 10-year anniversary, and we will celebrate in style. Inspired by the Olympic gold medal brought home to Alaska (thank you Kikkan Randall and U.S. Team) we will be mailing gold pins to all members this year, and we will gifting GNSC moose hats to all members that can show us 10 years of moose pins. Yes, start searching your old ski jackets for past moose pins! More details to come.

It was a roaring good time on the trails as the Girdwood Grizzlies recently hosted middle school races.

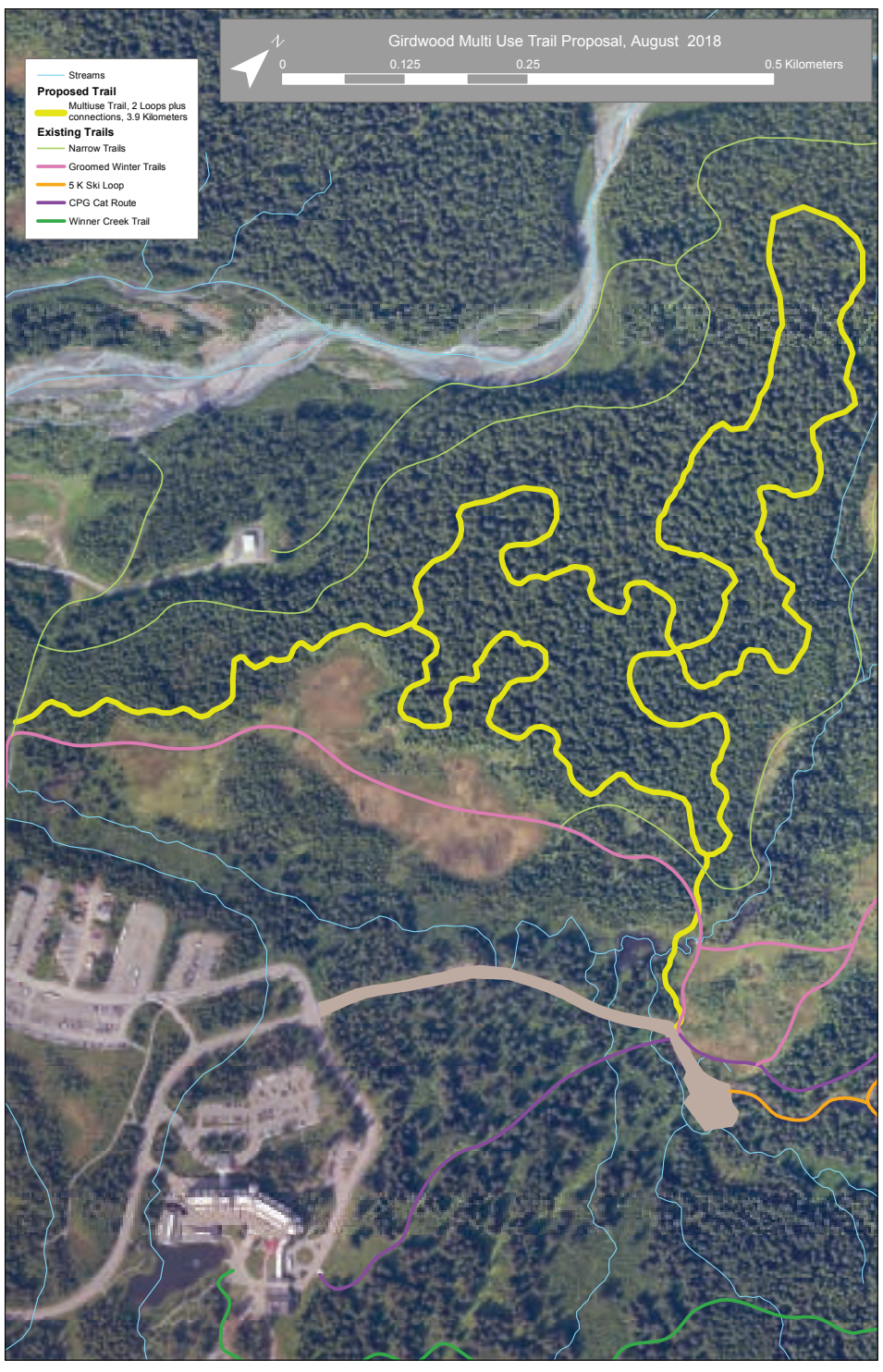
In November, the GNSC will begin organizing our volunteer grooming gang. We work in conjunction with the Girdwood Parks and Recreation, and directly with Kyle Kelley to form a safe, insured, and educated bunch. If you are interested, please send Kyle an email at kelleykt@muni.org, or send the GNSC an email, and I'll forward them to Peter Zug.

In December, Donna Knutson and the GNSC will be hosting a dedication ceremony for the completed Doug's Bridge project in memory of her late husband and Nordic enthusiast/volunteer Doug Knutson. Doug was active in the Nordic Clubs of Fairbanks, Anchorage and Girdwood, and we are honored to remember him along the trail. Supportive and safe connections like these bridges will provide our community with a more connected trail system. Date and time TBA.

Also in December, we will celebrate our annual Solstice "Bring on the Light" ski and bonfire on December 21. We will have hats, socks and insulated mugs on sale, free hot chocolate and cookies, music and beautifully decorated trees to enjoy! BYO-Marshmellows!

Until then, I hope to see you on the trails. If you agree with our proposed trails plan, I encourage you to write a letter of support. As many of you know, trail proposals included many meetings and monumental fundraising. If you can't attend meetings, writing letters is a great way to show the expanding community that you are in favor of connected multi-use trail systems. Healthy trails systems create healthy communities; just ask a Girdwood Grizzly runner.

Brandon McSkimming, Jim Braham, Peter Zug, Shane Bowlin and Jason McSkimming helping spread woodchips.



Eagle River Nordic Ski Club
Eagle River, Alaska

P.O. Box 770117, Eagle River, Alaska 99577
Club hotline — 689-7660
Junior nordic hotline — 689-7661
cernsc.wildapricot.org

Greetings to Alaska Skiers!

Message from Jason Dennis / CERNSC President

After all of this fabulous fall weather it is hard to imagine the ski season is just around the corner. The CERNSC Board members have met recently to plan the upcoming 2018-2019 ski season. It is looking like it will be a banner year. The first event is our Annual Member Meeting. All Chugiak-Eagle River Nordic Ski Club members are invited to meet on 10/14/18 from 12-3pm at Birchwood Camp which is located off Beach Lake Road. There will be a general discussion about the current state of affairs with the club and new board members will be voted in. If you are new to the area and/or just want to come to the meeting, we would love to have you become part of our club and learn about how you can become support your local skiing community. Volunteers of the year, Ryan Caldwell and Rish Harty will be recognized for their endless work in helping the Jr. Nordic program be a such a success. A potluck BBQ will follow with burgers and hot dogs provided.

Last year we kicked of a new program partnering with Chugiak High School Ski Team to come along side our volunteer coaches to provide mentorship and to share some real-world technical knowledge. There was so much positive feedback from the coaches and ERJN skiers that we are not only continuing the program but looking to expand to include the Eagle River High School team as well. Their help was invaluable. We will have more information in the future coming about how high school skiers in the Chugiak/Eagle River area can get involved.

We are currently working on revamping the CERNSC website and the online sign-up for CERNSC and ERJN. Hopefully we will be able to have it go live before the start of this season. One of the goals is to be able to allow push communication from the system out to the parents and coaches information about events and skiing conditions. In an effort to try and eliminate the hotline.

Event locations have changed slightly from previous years, so watch carefully the location as well as date and time of events. All events will be posted on Facebook, CERNSC website, and the Nordic Skier.

Look forward to seeing you on the trails soon.

CERNSC 2018-19 proposed fall schedule

Jr. Nordic Signup — 9/26/2018, Online
Annual Meeting and BBQ — 10/14/2018, Birchwood Camp, noon-3 p.m.
Rental Ski Waxing Day — 10/21/2018, Beiergrohsleins, noon-3 p.m.
Ski Swap and Ski Rental — 11/10/2018, Birchwood School, 9 a.m.-noon
Parent Meeting and Ski Rental — 11/17/2018, Beach Lake Chalet, 1-3 p.m.
Coaches Skate Ski Workshop — 11/26/2018, Beach Lake Chalet, 6-8 p.m.
Coaches Classic Ski Workshop — 11/27/2018, Beach Lake Chalet. 6-8 p.m.
Jr. Nordic M/W Kickoff — 12/3/2018, Beach Lake Chalet, 6:45-8 p.m.
Jr. Nordic T/Th Kickoff — 12/4/2018, Beach Lake Chalet, 6:45-8 p.m.

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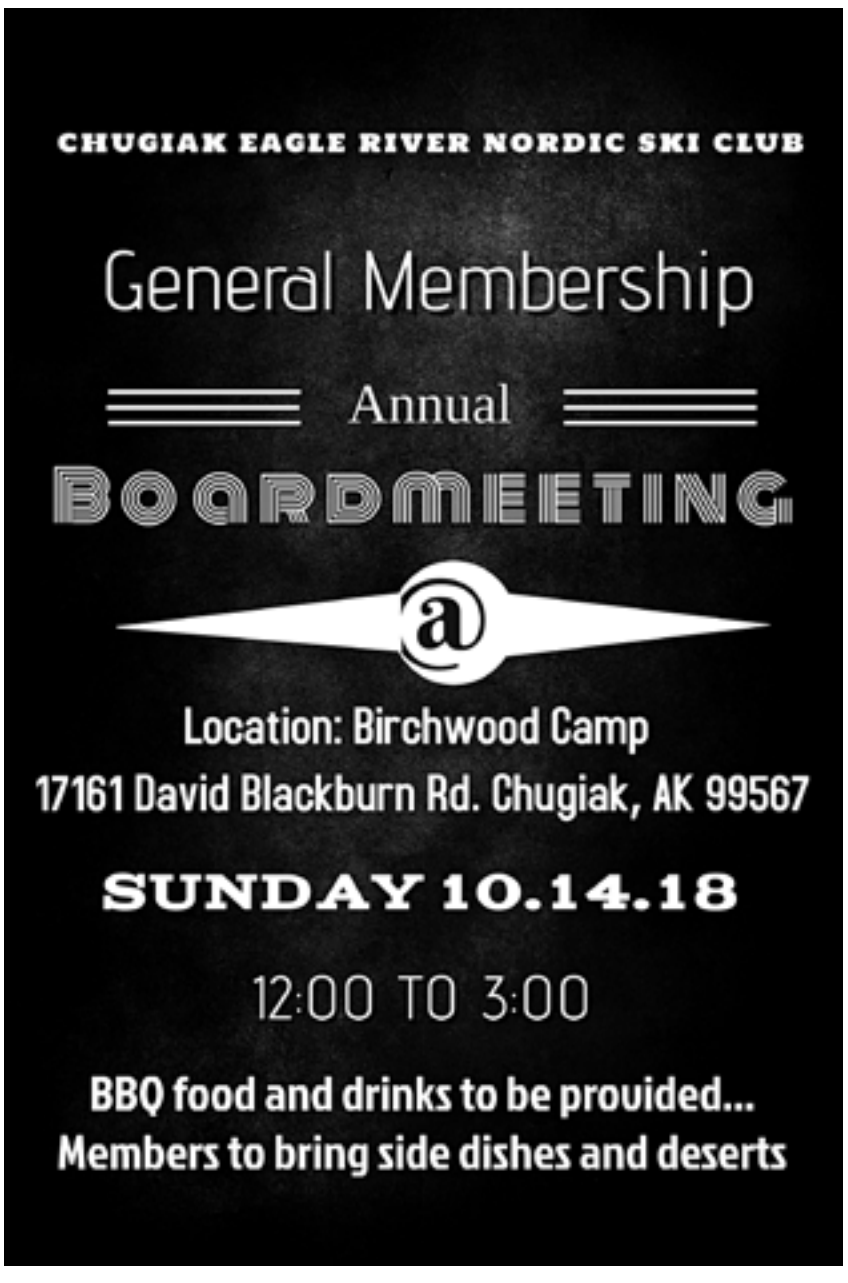
Find the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage on twitter at —
twitter.com/nordicskiclub

facebook.com/anchoragenordicski



BIRCHWOOD ABC SCHOOL

EAGLE RIVER JUNIOR NORDIC/MASTER'S SIGN-UP & SKI SWAP

SATURDAY 11.10.2018

- **ERJN Sign-Up and Gear Rental: 8:00-12:00**
- **Ski Swap Gear Drop Off: 8:00-9:00**
- **Ski Swap: 9:00-11:00**
- **Ski Gear and Money Pick-up: 11:00-12:00**
- **Ski Waxing Demo by Toko**
- **Alaska Nordic Master's Sign-Up**

Eagle River Junior Nordic sign-up online at
http://www.cernsc.wildapricot.org/

Online registration ends 11.17.2017

ERJN Sign-Up Online @ CERNSC.wildapricot.org

ERJN online registration ends 11.17.2017

Two chances for ERJN rental ski's and poles... 11/10 at Swap & 11/17 at Kick-Off

Sign-up online to save time and money

CERNSC
Jason Dennis
907.726.7092

Questions?

jedennis@ft.nyl.com

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club

Homer, Alaska

P.O. Box 44, Homer, Alaska 99603
kachemaknordicskiclub.org
kachemaknordicskiclub@gmail.com

AROUND THE BAY

President's Message from Fritz Creek Skier

I am looking forward to another great ski season supported by the incredible volunteers of the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club. I was reminded that in the earlier days of the club "… we had meetings where we threw beer at each other …" but the trail system expanded and got groomed, events were a success, and everybody had a good time!

Although KNSC's preventative maintenance program for our grooming equipment was a success, we nonetheless had some very serious problems with equipment last year due to a couple of unfortunate episodes. One ATV lost its oil and then, quickly, its engine following an error by a very experienced and valued operator. This is the cost of doing business, however unfortunate. The operator felt terrible about it, but everyone makes a mistake now and again and we forgive him! However, after we replaced the engine, that engine also failed! After only three miles, it lost all of its coolant! We'll never really know how that happened because so many parts melted, but again, chalk it up to the cost of doing business with complex machinery. These two unfortunate events have put some real stress on the club's finances, but we will make it. KNSC now has a new snowmachine, an ATV with its third new engine (in almost as many days!), and a new (demo) ATV. Hopefully this year things will go more smoothly!

In other news, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly unanimously approved a Community Trails Management Agreement with KNSC. The agreement has not been completely finalized, so stay tuned. The agreement will give KNSC trail management authority for 20 years on the trails that cross 23 Kenai Borough parcels.

Super-thanks to all of you, our members, for making 2017-18 yet another best membership year ever for KNSC! We also have been receiving an extra donation from a pair of generous members to help support the Junior Nordic Program. They "never had kids so felt they could afford to help parents get their kids out skiing" through our equipment rental program — only $25 for skis and boots for the entire season. Keep the memberships coming and thank our groomers and volunteers! Many hands truly make for light work!

Ski you on the trails!

KNSC 2018- 2019 Events Calendar

In hopes of another good year of long-lasting snow, the KNSC has set up the following calendar of Nordic events for 2018-2019. For more information and updates about these events, check out kachemaknordicskiclub.org or on Facebook @ Kachemak Nordic Ski Club.

ONGOING

October 15-March 9 — Kachemak Women's Nordic – Mon, Wed, Fri from noon-1:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-noon. For details, visit http://kachemakwomensnordic.com/

January 26-February 23 — Junior Nordic Program — Saturdays, first session on Jan. 26th at Lookout Mountain Recreation Area. 1-2:30 p.m. Other locations TBA.

November 7 — Ski and Winter Gear Swap — 5:30 p.m. @ Homer High School Commons. Find great gear, sell your gear, get your skis waxed, and register and pick up skis for Junior Nordic

November 10 — Annual Meeting, Dinner, and Auction — 6 p.m., TBA.

December, TBA — Groomers Clinic and Refresher — Date and time TBA @ Lookout Mountain Maintenance Building. This is an important review/refresher for all KNSC groomers and an opportunity for those interested in becoming a groomer to sign up and learn the basics. Questions? 235-6018 or homerbrann@gmail.com.

December 26 — Ski Your Age @ Lookout Mountain Ski Area

January 18 — Friday Night Lights — Location depends on snow

January 26 — Junior Nordic Program — First session @ Lookout Mountain Recreation Area. 1-2:30 p.m. Other locations TBA.

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Baycrest Upper
Alan Parks

Baycrest Lower, Eveline State Recreation Site, Snowshoe Trails
Dave Brann

Lookout Mountain
Mike Byerly

McNeil Canyon School
Derek Stonorov

Trail Signs
Jennifer Edwards

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Bob Glen

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Kachemak Women's Nordic
Jasmine Maurer

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Megan Corraza

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Alaska Nordic Skier
Jeannie Woodring

School Races Coordinator
Leonard Miller

Backcountry Film Festival
Dan Del Missier

Winter Gear & Ski Swap
Mike Illg (Homer Community Recreation)

Besh Cup Races
Jan Spurkland

Friday Night Lights
Stacey Buckalew

Kachemak Bay Ski for Women & Haven House
Kris Holdereid/Shelly Laukitis

Wine, Cheese & Wooden Ski Tour
Kevin Walker/Marilyn Parrett

Kachemak Bay Marathon Ski
Deland Anderson

Homer Epic 100
Homer Cycling Club

Sea to Ski Triathlon
Derek Bynagle

A big thanks to Homer's hardworking KNSC volunteers

BY JEANNIE WOODRING

Behind the success of most Nordic ski clubs in Alaska is a handful of hearty volunteers.

In Homer, Marylou Burton and Kevin Walker stand out as two of the longest running and hardest working volunteers for the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club (KNSC).

For Marylou, volunteering happened soon after she moved to Homer with her husband Richard in 2004. At her first ski club meeting, she raised her hand when the KNSC president Dave Brann asked if anyone was interested in being an officer.

She stayed in that role for a year, then volunteered to help "in some small way" with the KNSC Nordic Ski Marathon that rolls and swooshes through the hills surrounding Homer.

"Apparently it was enough (volunteering) to land me the main job because the next year, I got volunteered to coordinate the marathon itself," Marylou says, "of course with a lot of help from others."

For the next 7 to 8 years, she ran the marathon every March, taking hours to coordinate an avalanche of volunteers that manned every aspect of the race.

"During the marathon years, I was lucky that KNSC has so many ready volunteers that stepped up without having to twist their arms," Marylou recalls. "So I didn't have to work very hard to recruit people, which is just as well because it's not easy for me to ask for help."

Marylou does find it easy to keep on volunteering. For about four years, she gathered and wrote the KNSC's news and features for the online statewide newsletter, The Alaska Nordic Skier.

"Concurrently with all this, I have – along with a lot of other people – done my share of timing, handing out bibs, etc., at races," she says.

At the annual Wine and Cheese Nordic ski event in spring, Marylou usually manned one of the stops for wine and food, then put on her skis and sped to the next stop so she could relax. Or she would do the reverse, have food and wine at one of the earlier stops, then speed to the next stop to serve food or wine.

She has also been a longtime volunteer for the Friends of the Homer Public Library.

"I volunteer for a number of reasons," Marylou says. "First, I am a heavy user of the trails and I've got the time – it's my way of contributing to something that I care about. Also, it's rewarding – you get a lot more out of volunteering that you put in."

Kevin at the wax table.

She thinks for a minute, and then adds, "I didn't really grasp this concept until we retired and moved to Homer and began to get involved in local non-profits. Being active in KNSC and other organizations has expanded our world exponentially."

Nowadays, when she's not logging volunteer hours for KNSC programs and other organizations, you'll find Marylou out on the trails around Homer in winter. "That's about the only downside of volunteering," she admits. "Sometimes I'd rather be out on the trails than handing out bibs at a ski race."

Kevin Walker is another familiar face behind most of the KNSC's events – from hours grooming trails to writing major grants that build Homer's landmark ski facilities.

"I first started grooming in Seward in 1994, dragging an attachment behind an Alpine now machine," he recalls. "It was one of those big machines with one ski in front and two tracks, I think."

When Kevin and his wife Jeanne moved to Homer in 2003, he began grooming by 2005 or 2006. Living midway between each of the major trail systems, he has groomed them

See **KNSC VOLUNTEERS**, Page 12

KNSC VOLUNTEERS

Continued from Page 11

all. "I'm not a grooming rock star like Dave Brann or John Miles," he says, "but I definitely help out for special events like the marathon, the wine and cheese ski, and the Epic."

For the 100K Epic Race that rolls through the outlying hills, Kevin and another volunteer, Pat Irwin, set out the original trail years ago. "That was also a good gig," he recalls. "I'd never ski 100K but was able to scout and ride around on snow machines to Caribou Lake, the Snomad's Palace cabin, and other far out places I'd never see otherwise."

In a typical year, he puts about 50 hours into grooming.

For the popular Wine and Cheese event every February, he and his wife did the organizing for about six years. That effort took about 20 to 30 hours a week for a few weeks before the event.

Kevin also served on the KNSC board of directors for a few years. When the Besh Cup race series comes to town, he volunteers to keep time and perform other chores.

And then there is Kevin's grant writing for KNSC – a big chore and one of his most satisfying accomplishments.

Homer's Lookout Mountain Recreation Area building took two Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grants. Kevin started attending meetings about building design in 2013, wrote the first grant in 2014, and administered and managed the work for that grant for $50,000 in the summer of 2015. That grant covered the dirt work, heated concrete slab, and work with a construction crew to put up the building shell.

From left to right, volunteers Dave and Molly Brann, Kevin and Jeanne Walker.

While managing that effort, Kevin wrote the second RTP grant for $30,000 in 2015 to finish the building's exterior and interior, and add a lean to and kiosk for work to be accomplished in 2016.

"I had lots of volunteer help from people during both grants," Kevin adds. "At times, this was like a fulltime job, working up to 40 hours per week between on the jobsite managing and helping out, helping coordinate work between contractors, keeping track of all the invoices and performance reports, and writing the grants, which involves hours of time on the phone and computer. The last grant I wrote was a 61-page package, getting input and documentation from probably 20 different agencies, boards, and elected officials."

But, like Marylou, Kevin volunteers because of the camaraderie. The times he has shared with his best friends, most of whom are longtime groomers, make for great memories. Like trying to dig out grooming machines for the Marathon race after a 3-4-foot snow dump … and getting stuck every couple hundred of feet in the soft snow … and taking all afternoon to load up the machines.

Another time Kevin's snow machine died when he was grooming a long trail and stuck in a deep valley with no cell phone coverage … in late afternoon. He post-holed for about a quarter mile to reach the top of a ridge and call for help. Dave Brann showed up with the KNSC's lead mechanic, Bill Hague, who took the engine apart and put everything back together. Kevin and his companions made it home in the dark, with all the snow machines running.

"If volunteering wasn't fun, I wouldn't be doing it," he concludes. "I get to work with some of my best friends, and meet other people with similar interests."

Marylou on Broken Knife Peak in Tutka Bay.

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With a trip of less than 15 minutes to Wasilla and Palmer, Hatcher Pass Village is perfect for families who want the convenience of the Mat-Su with the beauty of Hatcher Pass.

Visit **hatcherpassvillage.com** and follow us on Facebook **@hatcherpassvillage**. Call Lynda Locke at **(907) 232-1012** for more information.

Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska
SKIING UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

P.O. Box 80111, Fairbanks, AK 99708-0111
Competition Office — 907-474-4242
Competition Fax — 907-474-2073
Racing Hotline — 907-457-4434
nscfairbanks.org

Change of seasons brings changes of NSCF personnel

BY ERIC TROYER

Skiing may have been minimal over the summer, but the club was quite active. We have had several NSCF personnel changes.

The biggest change was the departure of Pete Leonard, who resigned as head coach and Director of Skier Development. In his position, Pete primarily headed up NSCF-FXC (Fairbanks Cross Country), the junior race-training program for the club. Pete left to become executive director of the Methow Valley Nordic Ski Educational Foundation. Alasdair Tutt was hired to replace Pete. Alasdair has been an FXC assistant coach for the past two years.

Leonard

Tutt

Pete leaves behind a flourishing junior race-training program, one that he was instrumental in creating. He was hired in 2006 as the first coach of FXC with just four athletes signed up for the program. He leaves a program with more than 100 participating athletes and several program levels. He also helped improve aspects of the club's Adult Lessons and Junior Nordics programs.

In addition to his club duties, Pete has held a number of other positions for Alaska and U.S. skiing organizations, including coach for the U.S. Ski Team at World Juniors, co-head coach of the Alaska Junior National Team, chair of the USSA Junior Coaches Subcommittee, and a member of the Cross Country Alaska Competition Committee. He will be missed.

Fortunately, the club has a great replacement. Alasdair has an extensive background in ski coaching and strength training. In addition to his FXC experience, his resume includes regional and national team positions in Australia and with the Steamboat Springs (Colorado) Winter Sports Club. He also has more than five years of international racing experience, possesses a Bachelor of Sports Coaching and Exercise Science, and is currently working on a Masters of Sports Science – Performance Optimization for Elite Sports.

Other personnel changes

Heaton

Aelin Allegood has left as the club's Sponsorship Coordinator. Aelin started the position in the summer of 2016 and had to step down because she was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2017. She is currently undergoing daily radiation. Rebecca Heaton has been hired to replace Aelin. Rebecca has worked for about a year as the club's Data Coordinator. She will hold both positions, which are part-time.

"I'm thrilled to be taking on the sponsorship coordinator position but I have very big shoes to fill!" Rebecca wrote in an email.

Rebecca had also been the Adult Lessons Coordinator for the club last season, but she has given up that position. Don and Tracy Pendergrast and Maria Case (Taylor) will be handling those duties this season.

Who's Who in the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

JUNIOR NORDIC HOTLINE
457-4437

PRESIDENT
Steven Hansen
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VICE PRESIDENT
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SECRETARY
Helena Reuter
secretary@nscfairbanks.org

TREASURER
Anna Sorenson
treasurer@nscfairbanks.org

AT-LARGE MEMBERS
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Peter Delamere
Chris Puchner
Mark Winford

ADULT LESSONS COORDINATOR
Don & Tracy Pendergrast and Maria Case (Taylor)
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FAIRBANKS JUNIOR NORDICS
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FAIRBANKS CROSS COUNTRY
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RACE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
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competitionevents@nscfairbanks.org

BIATHLON
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Eric Troyer | fbxskierparent@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Eric Troyer
newsletter@nscfairbanks.org

Australia to Alaska: Tutt comes north to lead top Fairbanks skiers

Alasdair Tutt leads a warm-up session in September with the NSCF-FXC Comp Team.
PHOTO BY **ERIC TROYER**

Alasdair Tutt has been with the NSCF since 2016. He started as an assistant coach for NSCF-FXC, the junior race-training program with the club. Alasdair was recently hired as the Head Coach and Director of Skier Development. He primarily coaches the FXC programs, but he also oversees aspects of Adult Lessons and Junior Nordics.

Alasdair grew up in southeast Australia and has been cross-country skiing since age nine. Alasdair represented Australia at the 2012-2014 Junior/Under 23 World Championships while completing a degree in sports coaching and exercise science from the University of Canberra.

We decided to ask him a few questions to find out a bit more about him.

How long have you been a cross-country skier? What do you remember about your first time on skis?

I've been skiing regularly now for 15 years. Prior to that I remember having one day on skis when I was four or five years old and falling over a lot, spilling tomato soup on my rental boots and maybe skiing a few hundred meters with my parents.

What do you like about cross-country skiing?

I love the access to wilderness and travel. With skiing I've made friends around the world and almost wherever I go, it's inevitable that you run into someone you've raced against, had the same coach as, or trained with at some point in time.

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

Hands down my favourite places to ski are Seefeld, Austria, and Falls Creek, Australia. I've spent so much time in both places and know every twist and turn so well that it's very relaxing and I always know where to find good coffee afterwards.

What other activities do you enjoy besides skiing?

I enjoy hiking, kayaking and mountain biking. A lot of my time now is taken up training my new dog into an adventure companion that won't eat my shoes, so we'll see what I can do once she's fully grown.

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

I moved to Fairbanks in May 2016 to take up the assistant coaching position with NSCF-FXC. Fairbanks has a great skiing community and it's the people who make it a special place to live.

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

I recently started studying my master's degree in sport science at Mid-Sweden University. Weirdly enough I seem to have fallen into the perfect place at the perfect time as we are going to be researching the effects of "extreme" cold on performance, and strategies to keep athletes performing well, and safe at low temperatures.

AROUND THE INTERIOR

It's time to register for Junior Nordics!

The temperatures are dropping. Snow is on its way. That means it's time to register your kids for the Fairbanks Junior Nordics program! This is a great way to introduce your kids to the sport of cross-country skiing. Lessons are open for ages 4 to 14. All levels welcome. To find out more, including how to register, see **nscfairbanks.org/programs/junior-nordics/.**

Tutt writes blog about Swedish bog running

Alasdair Tutt, NSCF Head Coach and Director of Skier Development, wrote about "bog running" during a training camp with Swedish skiers for FasterSkier's Wednesday Workout blog: **tinyurl.com/y7ztjnbw**

Norris featured in Trail Runner magazine

Fairbanks son and skiing phenom David Norris was featured in the October edition of Trail Runner magazine for being the two-time winner of the Mount Marathon race. The short article is part of a larger article titled "Top Trail Race Bucket List." But Norris's skiing accomplishments are featured prominently in the article about him noting that Norris is not a typical trail runner. "Most of his running is geared toward training for his primary sport, Nordic skiing." Trail Runner is available at newsstands or at **trailrunnermag.com**.

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. The number of Junior Nordics participants is growing along with the interest in our awesome sport! You do not need experience to participate, just a positive attitude and love of skiing that you are willing to share.

If you are interested, please contact Sally Endestad or Jennifer Williamson at juniornordics@nscairbanks.org; 907-371-9564. Junior Nordics lessons take place Mondays at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at UAF West Ridge, Tuesday/Thursday at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Birch Hill and Sunday at 2-3 p.m. at Birch Hill. There is also a new daytime program at 1-2 p.m. at Birch Hill Ski Center intended for home school children. See nscfairbanks.org for more information.

NSCF at Winter Expo

Come visit the NSCF table at the Winter Expo at the Carlson Center on October 6-7 to sign up for Junior Nordics, Adult Lessons or just learn more about the NSCF. Learn more about the expo at **fairbanksevents.com/go-winter-expo/**.

West Valley High School Ski Swap

It's the time of year to size up or exchange your used ski gear. The West Valley High School Cross Country Ski Team Ski Swap on October 19 and 20 will certainly help! The event will be held in the West Valley High School gym. For more info: **facebook.com/wvski/.**

Help NSCF By Going 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 nonprofit. Amazon donates a portion of its profits through its AmazonSmile program. Find out more about each program at: **nscfairbanks.org/support-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 www.nscfairbanks.org > calendar for more! You can also "like" the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks on Facebook to keep up with local events. Some of the upcoming events include:

Oct 24 and 31 — Wednesday Night Races

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 **anchoragenordicski.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 to **instagram.com/nscf_fairbanks/**.

New lot expands parking at Birch Hill Recreation Area

BY ERIC TROYER

Want to park at Birch Hill Recreation Area? You've now got more options.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough added a new parking lot over the summer where the terrain garden used to be behind the old equipment building. (See separate story on the new Terrain Park.) As of mid-September the lot is ready for parking, but a few items still needed to be added, including installation of two light poles and a pedestrian access staircase.

The new lot adds about 75 parking spaces, meaning the combined lots will hold about 350 cars. This will be a big help at busy times, especially during popular events.

"Large events causing parking to reach out into neighborhood streets or requiring shuttles highlighted the need for lot expansion," according to Lee Williams, facilities manager at Birch Hill.

The existing lower lot was expanded by several feet to allow for some parking to be available when team trailers are installed during large-scale events, Williams added.

PHOTO BY **ERIC TROYER**

The new parking lot, seen from near the West Ramp/North Forty intersection, includes a ramp and lights.

People are able to directly access the trails and public buildings from the new parking lot. A gate near the junction of West Ramp and North 40 trail provides access to the trails. Stairs and a ramp provide access to the buildings.

Construction of the new parking lot did mean the loss of the old terrain garden. Other options were considered but rejected.

"This area was the only real option available without sacrificing existing trails," Williams said.

The project was funded in 2015 through a federal highway access grant. It was fully designed in 2017, and on-site work began this summer, according to Williams.

"Acknowledgement of the need for more parking dates back at least a decade," he said.

Tips for new Fairbanks Junior Nordics parents

BY SALLY ENDESTAD

• Families with multiple kids, take a notebook to the store and jot notes on boot, ski and pole sizes needed for all children.

• Visit ski swaps to look for your specific needs before shopping at stores for retail prices. The kids grow so fast and you might find that they grow out of their equipment during the season. To avoid this problem, purchase boots with a bit more room and double the socks. It may be used in Fairbanks when our cold temps hit.

• Make sure if your child has never skied before to try on all the equipment inside on your living room carpet. Allow them the space to move around and find their balance a few times. Carve out some time at the ski area for them to safely put on their skis and begin to slide around even if they've never tried it before. That will help give them the necessary confidence it will take to successfully navigate the first lessons.

• A sense of humor on the days when it is really cold goes a long way in creating the steadfast attitude that all things are possible with the right attitude. Whatever the conditions, we'll make the best of it.

• Always carry extra mittens, handy heats and a neck warmer on days when it is cold. You can reuse them multiple times if you seal them in a jar before they lose their heat.

• Your car should be stocked with an extra bag containing socks, hats, mittens etc. You will need them at some point for your children or others who may be skiing with you.

• Label everything! Lesson days get crowded with excited kids who may not be paying attention when they pick up their belongings. Take a moment to be sure they have theirs.

• A warm snack before Jr. Nordics lessons along with water in the car afterwards (they really do work up a sweat!!) goes a long way in making your experience a good one. It also is setting the stage for the care of their bodies for any future endeavors.

• Enter the Town Series races! They are family oriented and give your child a chance to strut their stuff no matter what level they are at.

• Show up and ski – even if it is just once. Nothing reinforces the fun more than seeing mom or dad out there with them. Plus, it is good for mom or dad to get some fresh air. It might just turn into a wonderfully healthy habit!

• Take a day and ski with you kids when they are not at Jr. Nordics. Pick a lovely Saturday and ask your kids to take you for a ski at the UAF or Birch Hill trails. Believe it or not, that little bit of interest you show goes a long way and makes for a great family outing.

• Remember that hour once, twice or three times a week is also your hour as a parent. Enjoy the time.

• Sometimes the bundling and getting out the door process takes longer than the actual skiing time. Try to be OK with this! Eventually the time spent skiing exceeds the preparation time. There will be many weeks when you never make it out of the stadium or the terrain park. It'll come. Embrace it. Before you know it, you won't able to keep up with your kids!

• Listen to your child. There's a difference between needing a bit of encouragement and gently prodding your child when they're not excited about skiing. Don't ever force your child to participate.

• Building relationships is an extremely important element in the life of the child. Know your child. If you have an introvert and your personality is an extrovert, be sensitive to that. Give them the adequate space to form their own bonds. Stay after the session and speak with some of the other parents so that it creates a space for the child to develop relationships with the other kids.

• A lot of work goes into parenting in general but specifically, creating the desire for healthy exercise is part of our job. Being intentional with the activities to promote a healthy lifestyle is one way to do it. Children aim to please their parents. If parents make it a habit to exercise daily, kids learn by imitation and it becomes a part of their daily lives. Whether kids decide to ski as part of a competitive club or not, shouldn't matter. The ultimate goal is to have children moving and enjoying the sport of cross-country skiing.

Sally Endestad is co-coordinator for NSCF Junior Nordics.

Fairbanks Nordic Ski Patrol looking for volunteers to help keep skiers safe

BY ERIC TROYER

Want to help keep skiers safe at NSCF races? Considering joining the volunteer Fairbanks Nordic Ski Patrol. The FNSP is "always looking for potential candidates interested in patrolling," according to Patrol Director Nancy Hanneman.

The FNSP has volunteers at most of the major competitive events of NSCF, including coordinating with Birch Hill Alpine during the Sonot Kazoot. It has served the NSCF since 2015. The group is an offshoot of the Fairbanks Ski Patrol, which patrols the Ski Land alpine ski area, and has many members who patrol both. It also has members from the Moose Mountain and Birch Hill Alpine ski patrols.

The FNSP probably won't have an Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) certification course this year, but anyone who is interested in the Patrol could be a candidate status patroller for this season. Anyone with EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) training can try to challenge the OEC course.

To volunteer or find out more information contact Nancy Hanneman at akplacer@alaska.net.

PHOTO COURTESY OF **NANCY HANNEMAN**

Patrol Director Nancy Hanneman, right, and patroller Donna Gardino help keep skiers safe at a recent NSCF ski race.

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New Terrain Park Replaces Old Terrain Garden

BY ERIC TROYER

Bump Garden? Terrain Garden? Terrain Park? Whatever you call it, where is it?

The expansion of the parking lot at Birch Hill required that the Terrain Park be moved. It is now in the woods between legs of the Warm Up Loop.

The new location was chosen to meet several criteria: 1) near the stadium, 2) a relatively large area with no crossing trails, and 3) a steep enough gradient to provide the speed needed to make the features functional.

While the new Terrain Park is within legs of the Warm Up Loop, it has been designed so that skiers won't be shooting out onto the Warm Up Loop. And the new park will have two light poles so that it can be used at night.

The new park will be different and better than the old one, according to John Estle, club competition director.

"Rather than a single, open area, it has 3-4 discrete trails that can be followed," Estle wrote in an email. "A large 'start hump' (pile of earth) will give skiers the ability to start with a higher speed than is afforded by starting at the natural grade/elevation. The banked turns in the old TG were useless, as it was impossible to get enough speed to actually ski up on the banked turns. The new TP features some banked turns that should actually work."

The separate trails will greatly reduce the risk of collision between skiers that was an aspect of the open terrain garden, according to Pete Leonard, former Head Coach and Director of Skier Development, who was involved in the design of the new park. The trails have been designed to accommodate different skills and abilities.

"The goal is to make this place so much fun to ski that the kids are in love with skiing and love every opportunity to go to Birch Hill and don't even think about the 20 second sprint they are doing up the hill to start the next run, nor the agility, balance and coordination they are developing each time they go down," Leonard wrote in an email.

"The new Terrain Park is a big improvement over the old terrain garden," Estle added. "Much more variety, many more options, much more interesting."

Funding for the Terrain Park has come from a variety of sources, according to NSCF President Bruce Jamieson: "The FNSB Parks and Rec, Parking Lot Expansion grant, NSCF and Rasmuson Foundation have all contributed in an effort to get this project completed."

Work on the park started in 2017 when Alaska Fire Service hotshot crews cut trees, but the park won't be finished for at least another year, according to Head Groomer Tom Helmers: "We are trying to get it useable this season, and finish it next summer."

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OFF THE TRAIL

The Body Adapts

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

I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of another great season of The Nordic Skier! I hope you had a great summer and are diving into training for the upcoming winter!

And it is right now, when transitioning from leisure hiking, backpacking, boating, biking and other great summer activities to ski-specific training, that our bodies start to complain a bit. It may be that pesky plantar fasciitis or Achilles tendopathy chirping at you, or an arthritic knee making you adapt your training. You may suddenly notice that a pain has surfaced without you 'doing anything special.'

Here is the good news: **The body adapts – as long as applied stress is not greater than the body's capacity to adapt.**

What does it mean?

Think about your cardiovascular system. Your first 5-mile run at the beginning of running season is pretty tough, but then it gets much, much easier as your system develops an aerobic base and endurance as it adapts. It's the same with our tissues.

If you allow tissues to be gradually loaded, they get stronger and more durable to the stress you are putting them through. Your Achilles gets tougher and more resilient. Your knee cartilage gets stronger. The plantar fasciitis resolves.

The tissues adapt.

When you load tissues (tendon, muscle, cartilage), microdamage occurs. The tissue repairs – often stronger – than its previous version. This takes approximately 72 hours.

But you can't completely rest for those 72 hours, otherwise you'll reset back to square one. The recommendations are to cross-train; light skate ski after a hard classic interval day, bike, or hit the gym.

Don't forget your sleep! If you are training hard, your body may need the 8+ hours at night, plus an extra nap (what a luxury!). Appropriate nutrition is also extremely important; you may recover very fast with good nutrition, otherwise it may take weeks. Sleep and nutrition are the best anti-inflammatory remedies out there.

If the load to your tissues is more than can be repaired in 72 hours, we start noticing increased pain and fatigue. Scale back slightly, and make

sure your recovery is optimal. But don't rest completely unless absolutely needed. Talk to your physical therapist.

The takeaways:

• Unless you are following a strict training plan designed to have you peak at a certain time of the year, try to space your most intense workouts 3 days apart.

• Cross-train between high intensity days.

• Recover well! Sleep and good nutrition are the best recovery remedies you can get your hands on.

• If you have increased pain, try to identify the cause. Not "I did a lot of hill sprints on Tuesday," but maybe "I did a lot of hill sprints on Tuesday after doing striding intervals on Monday after a backpacking trip and not sleeping well over the weekend" ... you get the picture.

advanced physical therapy

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**

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