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the ALASKA nordic skier

APRIL/MAY 2019, VOL.20, NO.7

PHOTOS BY **JIM JAGER**

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!

Anchorage 2
Eagle River 12
Fairbanks 13
Girdwood 11
Kachemak 10
Mat-Su 7
Statewide 8,9

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

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Thank you and best wishes, Erin!

NSAA recently bid farewell to an amazing employee, friend and community member: Erin Beam. As NSAA's Business Manager, Erin was a dedicated employee and spent the last five years making our Nordic community stronger. Her passion for Nordic skiing, trails, skiers, volunteers and her coworkers is well known. She was always the first in a group discussion to come up with a clever way to educate the community about NSAA and all the ways it benefits our community.

If you had the fortune to work with Erin, you know she's got a great sense of humor and a welcoming attitude. Her positive energy and enthusiasm is contagious and she approached all projects and events with a smile.

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!

Thank you for a wonderful season!

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 every 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 Caterinichio, Sara Miller, Mike Miller, Josh Niva, Elizabeth Arnold, Alex Grumman, Will Earnhart, Tim Miller and Claire LeClair.

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JUNIOR NORDIC

Program Director: Shannon Donley. Volunteers: Shaina Seidner, Ryan Padgett, Jason Alward, Ayme Johnson, Jason Hartz, Alex Post, Julie Gautier, and many many others!

ALASKA SKI FOR WOMEN

Event Director: Jenny DiGrappa. Volunteers: Meg Stehn, Diane Moxness, Deborah Hansen, Celia Rozen, Tamra Kornfield, Kelly Fehrman Royce, Julie Truskowski, Greg DuBois, Jim Renkert, Britta Hamre, Gabriel F, Edward H, Colton H, Joseph H, Anders H, Kurt Hensel, Elaina Hveding, Ryan Haller, Dr. Charlie Gray, Erin Kirkland, Jackie Purcell, Anika Biss, Paulette Compton, Bob Stehn, Tim Brabets, Charles Utermohle, Sandy Johnson, Jan Hazen, Patrick McGownd, Matt Claman, Jay Holtan, Jeff Rubin, Chet Fehrman, Tucker McGownd, Michael Henrich, Helen Foster, Robby Bear, Kay Rodriquez, Robbie Pounds, Heather Helzer, Megan Sawtelle, June Takagi, Sami Glascott, Kalima Glascott, Diane Granfors, Shaina Seidner, Jennifer Brown, Linda Remaley, Ken Holmes, Amanda Thompson, Colin Hawkins, Jessie Lavoie, Ginger Hansell, Sylvia Maiellaro, Lisa Keller, Julie Bladel, Stacey Ledgerwood, Kim Kloecker, Celia Foley, Tim Stone, De Lewis, Melonie R., Steve Morris, Ed Kornfield, David Hulen, Steve Livingston, Tom Brooks, Caitlin S., Trish O'Gorman, Kirsten Anderson, the timing crew, Scout Troop 210, and Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

SEASON KICKOFF & SKI SWAP

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PHOTOS BY **JEN AIST**

SKI 4 KIDS

Event Director: Erin Witmer. Volunteers: Beth Elliott, Lia Slemons, Lauri Bassett, Tom Miller, Jean Miller, Beth Miller, Iain Miller, Agneta Kupulik, Geoff Wright, Cathy Wright, Pango Technology, Joe Mumm, UAA Nordic Ski Team, Dimond High JROTC, Shannon Donovan, Sara Byran, June Takagi, Girl Scout Troop 311, Sheryl Stevens, Greg Fahl, Lisa Demer, Marian Mamikunian, Isabelle Watkins, Kira Young, Shea Kirkpatrick, Nicholas Choi, South High School Honor Society, Berkleigh Radcliffe, Tia Kay, Carter Johnson, Haley Strand, Jaelyn Drenon, Ciara Hellmann, Lee Bolling, Robert Whitney, Chad Trammel. Christie Haupert, Matias Saari, Lauri Basset, Cathy Miller, Allene Whitney, Darcy Dugan, Alice Knapp, and Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

TOUR OF ANCHORAGE

Race Director: Matias Saari. Volunteers: David Apperson, Lauri Bassett, Julie Bladel, Colin Bonfield, Sandor Brown, Debra Lee Caldera, Dorothy Childers, Chris Clark, Trevor Clayton, Nick Crawford, Susan Crowther, Steven Deckert, Maggie Donnelly, Cindy Drinkwater, Jeannette Duenow, Jessica Duersch, Ben Elbow, Diana Evans, Kate Fitzgerald, Bill Fleming, Celia Foley, Branden Fontana, Jean Funatake, Sami Glasgott, John Glidden, Kendall Goggins, Ryan Gough, Christina Grande, Deb Greene, Ben Greene, Tom Grenier, Mike Hajdukovich, Yuki Hayano, Michael Hayward, Nat Herz, Korin Homestead, Paul Hosmanek, Suzie Hosmanek,

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Anson Moxness

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JUNIOR NORDIC
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Geoff and Cathy Wright

SKI 4 KIDS
Erin Whitney Witmer

SKI JUMPING
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.

THANK YOU

Continued from Page 2

Shelly James, Emily Jane, Jenia Jarrett, Mike Jens, Sandy Johnson, Don Johnson, Jen Jolliff, Megan Kemz, Tim Kirk, Luke Kiskaddon, Michael Kluber, Alice Knapp, Karla Kolash, Bob Koontz, Tamra Kornfield, Libby Kugel, Rebecca Kurtz, Jason Lamoreaux, Shelly Laws, Dolly Lefever, Zach Liller, Heather Liller, Alyse Loran, Marney Mallory, Lupe Marroquin, Greg Matyas, Steve McKeever, Mike Miller, Sara Miller, Iain Miller, Mike Miller, Al Mitchell, Pete Mjos, Ian Moore, Travis Morin, Anson Moxness, Molly Mylius, Anne Newman, Robert Owens, Matt Pauli, Marc Phillips, Brad Precosky, Nick Pulice, Marina Ramirez, Kerry Reifel, Jim Renkert, Laurel Renkert, Rick Rogers, Luke Rosier, Kiri Rothacker, Ryan Rothacker, Celia Rozen, Larry Rundquist, Steve Ryan, Julie Saddoris, Rachel Samuelson, Alice Samuelson, Heidi Schultz, Sharon Scudder, Gabby Serventi, Brian Shumaker, Alison Smith, Bob Stehn, Meg Stehn, Sam Sterling, Corky Still, Paul Stone, Tim Stone, Mark Strabel, Jamey Stull, Bill Sutter, Sheila Swanson, Bruce Talbot, JP Tarbath, Will Taygan, Schawna Thoma, Ann Marie Tomski, Janice Tower, Liz Turner, Adrienne Voss, Tom Willets, Alden Worachek, Jim Young, Chris Zafren, and Heidi Zimmer, Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol, Boy Scout Troop 214, Service Seminar, Bartlett High Ski Team, East High Ski Boosters, Chugiak High Ski Team, West High Ski Boosters, Boy Scout Troop 190, South High Ski Boosters, Dimond High Ski Team, and Eagle River High Ski Team.

BACKCOUNTRY TOURS

Lead: Mary Vavrik. Volunteers: Elizabeth Bluemink, Mason Wick, Ed Kamienski, Ray Cammisa, Amy Holman, Michael Henrich, Karlene Leeper, Patti Phillips, and Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RACING

Chief Coordinator: Diane Moxness. Volunteers: Keven Apgar, Alison Arians, Charlie Bader, Michael Baffery, Carl Battreal, Anne Binnian, Michelle Bittner, Hilkka Bold, Tim Brabets, Ed Brewer, Shannon Brookman, Tom Brooks, Jim Burkholder, Sally Burkholder, Bob Butera, Liz Butera, Kathryn Carovano, Summer Cutting, Joan Darnell, Joe Darnell, Wendy Davis, Lori Deschamps, Virgina Elliot, Ivette Fernandez, Sally Gibert, Chuck Gilbert, Jason Gray, Lin Hinderman, Gail Hoeffler, Julie Houle, Carina Howe, Laurie Hulse, Alice Knapp, Gunnar Knapp, Claire LeClair, Donna Mears, Iain Miller, Mike Miller, Rita Miller, Pete Mjos, Steve Morris, Nancy Munro, Rebecca Nichols, JR Patee, John Power, Connie Quinley, John Quinley, Dana Rosso, Delyse Rosso, Tim Samuelson, Buzz Scher, Dan Schwartz, Cory Smith, Dick Snyder, Bob Stehn, Meg Stehn, Sandy Stewart, Tim Stone, Bruce Talbot, Jeni Thongdy, Julie Truskowski, Candace White, Mark Worcester, Cathy Wright, Chris Zafron, and many parent volunteers.

HIGH SCHOOL RACING

Chief Coordinator: Buzz Scher. Volunteers: Scott Belyea, Anne Binnian, Tim Brabets, Ed Brewer, Tom Brooks, Sally Burkholder, Jim Burkholder, Liz Butera , John Christopherson, Joan Darnell, Joe Darnell, Paul Denkewalter, Rob Dolan, Georgia Gustafson, Colin Hawkins, Lin Hinderman, Gail Hoefler, David Hulen, Peter Johnson, Alice Knapp, Elizabeth Knapp, Gunnar Knapp, Dave Kochevar, Robin Kornfield, Ove Madsen, Patrick McGownd, Iain Miller, Michael Miller, Mike Miller, Peter Mjos, Steve Morris, Diane Moxness, Molly Mylius, Celia Rozen, Tim Samuelson, Jim Singleton, Ros Singleton, Dick Snyder, Bob Stehn, Meg Stehn, Tim Stone, Fred Stutzer, June Takagi, Bruce Talbot, Tina Tomsen, and Peter Tryon.

BIATHLON PROGRAM & EVENTS

Tom Grenier, Steve Wilson, Catherine Kilby. Volunteers: Sarah Wilson, Marcia Brandy, Scott Belyea, Jack Porter, Catherine Kilby, Douglas Cobb, Michael Milhollin, Carleen Ulbrich, Mike Burns, Amanda del Frate, Zoey Grenier, Chad Carpenter, Neil Brauer, Deana Watson, Gino del Frate, Patricia Grenier, Amy McLeod, Laurie Hulse, Karl Hulse, Chuck Eggener, Martha Woods, Niles Woods, Dan Brokaw, and Miles Michel.

SOLSTICE TREE TOUR

Event Director: Sara Miller. Volunteers: Frank Mitchell, Liam Mitchell, Chloe Hebert, Emma Hale, Aleah Williams, Ashlee Miller, Kavya Riedman, Alys Korosei, Ciara Hellman, Rosie Frankowski, Lauree Bertrand, Heidi Schulz, Josh Niva, Jen Aist, Rebecca Rose, Nicky Rose, Jenny DiGrappa, Sheila O'Reily, Anne Wilkas, Osa Dietrich, Mary Vavrik, Melani Clark, Darci Horner, Kate Nixon, Sheila Swanson, Michelle Crismore, Cindy Drinkwater, Clarke Drinkwater, Mike Miller, Toni Sparrow Teresa Fish, Stefanie Tatalias and daughters, Rita Miller, Travis Durnford, Debbie Rose, Alison Lausten, Alex Grumman, and Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol.

JUMP PROGRAM

Program Directors: Karen Compton and Vivienne Murray. Volunteers: Barbara Amy, John Androski, Meredith Autrey, Stephen Bahner, Jill Brubaker, Steve Cleary, Joey Eski, Maureen Fiscus, Kenneth Hatch, Carla (Kylara) Hollingsworth, Hillary Jochens, Donald Katz, Matt Malouf, Jane Martinez, Missy Matthews, Kevin Menkens, Rebecca Moran, Erin Munro, Lynn Palmquist, Elizabeth Schafer, Laura Smith, Germaine Thomas, Daniel Vetsch, Erin Witmer, Frank Witmer, Regina Woods, Jason Young, and Daniel Young.

JUNIOR NATIONALS

Event Chair: Joey Caterinichio. Volunteers: Joan Antonson, Henry Arend, Alison Arians, Murray Athans, Alycia Beiergrohslein, Mike Beiergrohslein, Zoee Beiergrohslein, Scott Belyea, Maria Berger, Judy Besh, Emily Binnian, Reagan Blackley, Gavin Block, Erin Boklage, Shauna Boquist, Tim Brabets, Jim Braham, Karen Bronga, Tom Bronga, Holly Brooks, Jill Brubaker, Mike Brubaker, Peter Burgoon, Jim Burkholder, Sally Burkholder, Liz Butera, Patricia Casey, Jackie Cason, Sam Cason, Ava Cook, Jacob Cryder, Jennifer Cryder, Teresa Danielson, Joan Darnell, Joseph Darnell, Gino DelFrate, Paul Denkewalter, Dave Disselbrett, Shannon Donley, Lauren Dorris, Ryann Dorris, Lisa Druckenmiller, Patricia Druckenmiller, Matt Dudley, Lisa Earnhart, William Earnhart, Eric Egeland, Sally Endestad, Joey Eski, Wayne Eski, Diana Evans, Susan Faulkner, Berit Flora, Ashley Franklin, Tomas Geddon, Eric Geisler, Penelope Geisler, Lindsey Gerlach, Edith Gonzales, Georgia Gustafsen, Michele Hansen, Sonja Harris, Matt Heimburger, Heather Helzer, Cindy Hendel, Robyn Henry, Trisha Herminghaus, P.J. Hill, Dave Hillemeyer, Lin Hinderman, Gail Hoefler, Mimi Hogan, Joe House, Lori House, Jerry Houser, Tracey Houser, Jim Jager, Scott Jerome, Donna Jim, Amy Johns, Liz Johnson, Peter Johnson, Catherine Kilby, Alice Knapp, Robin Kornfield, Tamra Kornfield, Susan Kramer, Joe Kurtak, John Lapkass, Claire LeClair, Jeremy Littell, Stephen Livingston, Deb Love, Dave Lucey, Judith Lurie, Ove Madsen, Cindy Mans, Lisa Maurer, Kristen Maves, Barb McMullen, Blaine Meeds, Tim Middleton, Iain Miller, Mike Miller, Nora Miller, Sara Miller, Tim Miller, Joann Mitchel, Pete Mjos, Peter Mjos, Jeanne Molitor, Steve Morris, Anson Moxness, Diane Moxness, Mike Moxness, Liz Muckerman, Carolyn Musgrave, Matt Nedom, Anne Newman, Josh Niva, Arianna O'Harra, Doug O'Harra, Helen O'Harra, Judy Palmer, Steve Patterson, Matt Pauli, Nancy Pease, Hap Pierce, Bob Pintner, Bryce Pintner, Maureen Pintner, Tom Plowman, Alan PoKorny, Pam Pope, Jack Porter, John Power, Laarni Power, Rick Proffitt, Stephanie Proffitt, Nicholas Pulice, John Quimby, Connie Quinley, John Quinley, Diane Ramey, Caroline Renner, Jeffrey Ritter, Cesar Rodgers, James Rodrigues, Luke Rosier, Hannah Rowland, Celia Rozen, Larry Rundquist, Stefan Saldanha, Alice Samuelson, Rachel Samuelson, Tim Samuelson, Buzz Scher, Dirk Schoonmaker, Amy Schumacher, Dan Schwartz, Shelly Schwenn, Allan Serrano, Elizabeth Shen, Juliana Shields, Rosalyn Singleton, Bob Stehn, Sheryl Stevens, Tim Stone, June Takagi, Bruce Talbot, Joshua Taylor, Margaret Timmerman, Kelly Tirpack, Chris Tomsen, Lex Treinen, Julie Truskowski, Mike Truskowski, Chris Turletes, Mark Udevitz, Charles Utermohle, Donna VanFlein, Marilyn Watts, Phil Weidner, Charlie Whitaker, Candace White, Rob Whitney, Sarah Wilson, Steve Wilson, Niles Woods, Maya Yas, and Chris Zafren.

TRAIL WORK (SUMMER AND WINTER) AND KINCAID PARK SNOWMAKING

Mike Miller, Tim Brabets, Tim Stone, Jack Porter, Steve Beardsley, Matt Pauli, Christ Turletes, Dave Lucey, Mark Thomas, and Jeff Ritter.

SKI TRAIN

Event Director: Travis Taylor. Volunteers: Emily Taylor, Russel Dudley, Megan Taylor, Savannah Hays, Diana Redwood, Derek Kleehammer, Sara Kleehammer, Andrew Dunmire, Abbie Newby-Kew, Chris Jung, Andrew Lange, Dylan Robertson, Olivia Cohn, Jill Johnstone, Holly Beaty, Cami Timothy, Tony Campbell, Steve Schell, Michea Westbrook, Michael Philip, Sara Jane Philip, Jessica Roses, Clayton Harrison, Tracy Smith, Kyle James, Vicky Pringels, Teslyn Korsmo, Marci Graham, David Dempsey, Kristen Olson, Hillary Fisher, Andrew Dunagan, Mark Stoneburner, Neal Haglund and Alaska Blaskapelle (Polka Band), Greg Solomon, David Disselbrett, Frank Pijuan, Dean Knapp, Robyn Henry, Michael Olive, Jonathan Bressler, Katie Archer, Stefan D'Angelo, Amy Holman, Roisin Murphy, Eric Cannon, Kenton Curtis, Adam Holm, Deb Kelly, Jim Mullin, Eric Geisler, Heather Liller, Zach Liller, Tom Plawman, Kakiko Ramos-Leon, Joe Kurtak, Jackie Keating, Hilary Morgan, Brian Walsh, Nicholas Pulice, Robin Dublin, Penelope Geisler, Sean Bolender, Nick Pysz, Corey Aiste, Goat (dog) Aiste, Erin Boklage, Tucker (dog) Boklage, Heather Bell, and Chispa (dog) Bell.

SKAN24

Event Directors: Geoff Wright & Cathy Wright. Volunteers: Bob Stehn, Meg Stehn, Iain Miller, Tim Stone, Marti Pausback, Celia Rozen, Ben Michaelson, Duncan Wright, Caleb Rauch, Garrett Yager, and Camille Oliver.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Dan Rosenburg. Volunteers: Brian Hoefler, and Celia Rozen.

NSAA Member Spotlight: Ryan and Steph Rupert

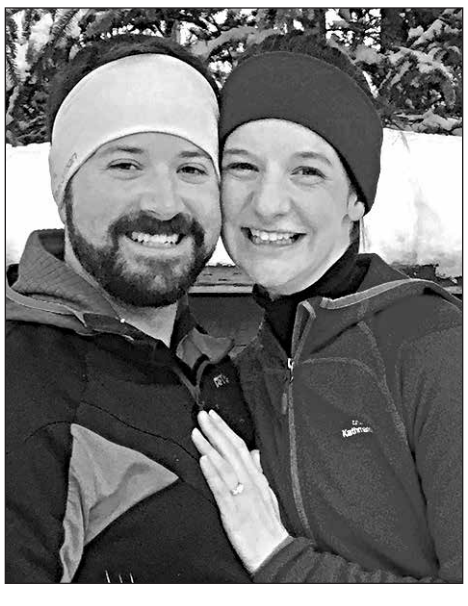
NSAA is always thrilled to celebrate and thank its special members. This season, NSAA is spotlighting a handful of those supporters with short stories in the Nordic Skier. April's NSAA Members of the Month are Ryan and Steph Rupert, who have been involved with NSAA since they started skiing 10 seasons ago, around 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 community.

What does NSAA's mission mean to you?

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

Do you have some 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 at Conversation Corner. It was the worst day possible to skate ski, but she stuck with me!

the Alaska nordic skier

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The Alaska Nordic Skier is a publication representing the nordic ski clubs of Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Mat-Su, Salcha, Seward, Soldotna, Kenai, Talkeetna and Valdez. The Alaska Nordic Skier is published October through April by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, Inc.

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Articles, letters and advertisements are welcome. Please ensure all names are correct and information is accurate. Submissions may be edited for clarity, content and space limitations. Deadline is the 15th day of the prior month. E-mail nordicskiereditor@gmail.com.

On the cover – The action was intense and awesome at the 2019 U.S. Junior Nationals at Kincaid Park. Photo by Jim Jager.

NSAA Programs/Events 2018-19 season recap

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

PHOTO BY **JENNIFER LOOFBOURROW**

PHOTO BY **ANDY ROMANG**

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

PHOTO BY **CASEY MARTINEZ**

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

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RECAP

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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, LaTouche Pediatrics, Anchorage Pediatric Group, Elsberg Family Foundation, CRW Engineering, and Midnight Sun Smiles. In-kind sponsors Great Harvest Bread Company, Kaladi Brothers Coffee and

PHOTOS BY **JEN AIST**

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

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!

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SPONSORED

Make tracks to TRAX on your way to Kincaid!

TRAX Outdoor Center 2.0, Anchorage's newest Nordic ski shop, is situated perfectly on your way to Kincaid Park in the Tastee Freez mall.
We rent skate skis and classic skis from race to touring styles.
We wax with same-day service, and 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. :)

Private and group ski lessons!

Same-day ski wax service!

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6700 Jewel Lake Rd. (Tastee Freez mall) | Traxoutdoorcenter.com | (907) 378-7800 | facebook.com/TraxOC2.0/ | @traxoc2.0

RECAP

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After Steamboat, our Junior National Team of four competed in Park City, Utah, at the USA Nordic Junior Championships. For many junior skiers, this event is a major goal to compete in and a great opportunity to experience a high-level competition. With opening and closing ceremonies, official training, livestream and three days of competition, it's the real deal. We had great results, including a bronze medal finish in the U15 two-man team sprint! At the end of the week, one of our athletes, Carter Brubaker, was recognized as the Male Sportsman of the championship for his relay performance! Carter stepped up to race in the U20 relay so that his teammate had a partner to race with – just after Carter had raced to a medal in the U15 relay event!

After the Junior Championships, we had one week back in Anchorage before I hit the road again to take two athletes to the North American Championships in Whistler, B.C. We had a fantastic week at the 2010 Olympic venue, with the backdrop of sunny spring skies and plenty of British Columbia snow. Skyler Amy, one of our youngest big hill fliers, flew 125 meters in training! He's 13!

As a coach, I truly enjoyed taking some of my athletes on the road. Regardless of the results, there's an immense amount of learning to be had from seeing new places and faces. Living in Alaska, where our division consists of just one ski jumping club, it's especially important for our athletes to take advantage of these opportunities.

– Adam Loomis,
NSAA Ski Jumping program coach

PHOTO BY **GLORIA MENZEL**

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.

– Elizabeth Bluemink,
Backcountry Tours volunteer

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

PHOTO BY **CATHY WRIGHT**

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 premier stadium campsites 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 extraordinaire, skied 39 laps for a total of 247.5K in 24 hours!

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

– Sara Kamahele,
NSAA Program Manager

PHOTO BY **JAN HAZEN**

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

Snow and cold weather made for perfect trail conditions at the 2109 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!

– Jenny Di Grappa,
Ski for Women Director

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.

PHOTO BY **TOM GRENIER**

Mark Eggener, Josh Bierma and Hayden Ulbrich leave the range together on the final lap of the pursuit on day two of the NSAA Biathlon State Championships. Thirty athletes from all over Alaska competed at the state championship races on March 1-2. State division champions from Nome, Galena, Fairbanks and Anchorage were crowned.

PHOTO BY **LAURIE HULSE**

Mark Eggener, Josh Bierma and Hayden Ulbrich leave the range together on the final lap of the pursuit on day two of the NSAA Biathlon State Championships. Thirty athletes from all over Alaska competed at the state championship races on March 1-2. State division champions from Nome, Galena, Fairbanks and Anchorage were crowned.

PHOTO BY **LAURIE HULSE**

Mat-Su Ski Club

Palmer, Alaska

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AROUND THE VALLEY

Celebrating a successful season fueled by members, volunteers, partners and community trails

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 some 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 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 forth 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 GPRA 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, GPRA 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 completive 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 Rentals; Arkose Brewery; Backcountry Bike and Ski; Capstone Clinic; Colver Surveying; Kate and Mike Montano; Kuchar Construction; Lifetime Adventures; 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 Wieneke, Kirby Spangler, Matt Lemons, Shane Barber, Karen Hopp. Independence Mine, Archangel Rd, and the Government Peak Rec Area Groomers: Ashley Wise, Mark Strabel, Zack Steer, Jeff Kase, Jerry Hupp, Gil 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.

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Gene Backus

To those great persons 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; and 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 skis, a mix of junior RCS skate and classic skis with bindings. The folks 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 tge event. Ten teams/divisions representing multiple states/regions at this year's event: host Team Alaska; defending Alaska Cup champs New England; Pacific Northwest; Far West; Rocky Mountain; Intermountain; Midwest; Great Lakes;

See **JUNIOR NATIONALS**, Page 9

PHOTOS BY **JIM JAGER**

Anchorage's Gus Schumacher won all four U20 events he skied – three individual and one relay – in taking a Junior Nationals title sweep.

Fairbanks' Kendall Kramer was dominant as she swept all four U18 women's races, for three individual and one relay Junior National crowns.

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 Hinderman, 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 1990-1993 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 Kamahele, Anson Moxness, Andrew Kastning, Cody Priest, Branden Fontana, John Estle, Alasdair Tutt, Susan Faulkner, Scott Jerome, Nick Crawford, John Pothast, Joey Caterinichio, Matt Pauli, 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/team planners and their staff of coaches who offered their talents at Junior Nationals. These 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 Kiekintveld, Conner Truskowski, Sarissa Lammers, Galen Johnston, Marion Woods, and Karina Packer.

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 UAF coach Eliska Albrigtsen 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, Skiku, 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 Dusser, 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 weeknight 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 731 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.

Find full race results at **superiortiming.com/2019/03/us-cross-country-junior-nationals-2019/**. For more event, race, team and athlete information, visit **juniornationalsxc2019.com and www.facebook.com/xcjrnats2019**.

PHOTOS BY **JIM JAGER**

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
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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**.

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club
Homer, Alaska

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AROUND THE BAY

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 Sports – thank them for their generosity. An even better "thank you" is to bring your business to these local donors.

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 ski 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 Shirazzberry, 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 means of being outside and active during the winter," he said. "It allows us to be healthier physically and mentally and have a closer relationship with nature during the colder, darker months. It also fosters a sense of community that we really enjoy."

Fritz Creek General Store 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 more than 50 years ago.

Today, local residents and out-of-towners have learned to drive out to the store's location at Milepost 8 on East End Road for the cuisine: enchiladas better than anything north of Texas; decadent pastries that make your mouth water; thick, juicy sandwiches made ready to order at the best prices in Homer.

When neighbors run into difficulties, the Fritz Creek General Store contributes food and/or gift cards.

And the biggest sign of the General Store's contributions to the KNSC are fuel for the grooming machines. For the past decade, the store, owned by Sean Maryott and Diana Carbonell, has provided gas for grooming the McNeil Canyon/Eveline Nordic trails. The store gives the ski club a charge account for $1,000 a year. If the funds don't get used up one year, the money rolls over to the next year.

Derek Stonorov, one of the groomers at the McNeil/Eveline trail system, said, "For many years, Diana Carbonell and the Fritz Creek General Store have made a more than generous annual gift of $1000 worth of gasoline to KNSC."

"Directing some of the profit back to the community is how I'm able to sleep at night," Diana added. "We support a wide variety of causes, but recreation is selfishly important to me. I've been enjoying skiing for years and since I am one of those people who love skiing with their dog, I pretty much only ski the Eveline/McNeil trails."

"Paying for the gas seems like a small contribution when I get to reap the hours of work that the groomers put into making the trails such a pleasure to ski," she said. "Thank you to all the volunteers who make trails happen."

Homer Saw & Cycle: Generous with gear and service

Since the early 1990s, as long as Homer Saw & Cycle has sold ski equipment, the store has donated to the KNSC. Hardly a ski club event goes by without auction items or door raffle prizes contributed from the store.

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 comes to us 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.

See **AROUND THE BAY**, Page 11

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Homer Cycling Club

Sea to Ski Triathlon
Derek Bynagle

Girdwood Nordic Ski Club
Girdwood, Alaska

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Thankful for super skiers, magnificent members, great groomers, terrific trails and a snowy (and windy) season

BY DEB ESSEX

At this point, the only groomed snow left in Girdwood is on the Nordic 5K 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 73 trees fell due to snow-load and wind. Nine of those trees fell on the Girdwood 5K Loop. Because of fantastic board members Jim Braham, Peter Zug, and Brian Burnett, the tree-clearing work by Matt Mocosco and crew, and Alyeska 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 Braham cleared the 5K 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 Alyeska Resort, Chugach Powder Guides for grooming with their CAT and filling the soft spots in the meadows to ensure safe passage, board members Peter Zug and Jim Braham for their endless efforts in grooming and trail signage, board member Briana Sullivan for signage and dog waste disposal stations, groomers Jeff and Sharon Samuels, Ethan Tyler, Shane Bowlin, Kyle Kelly, Eben Stone, Tim Charnon, and John Gallop.

A huge thank you to our working GNSC board members. I'm 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 Stiassny 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 used to be coached by Lin Hinderman!

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 Alyeska Skimeister and Girdwood Marathon. You write letters of support for our continued goal to create more multiuse 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

"I forgot about the hats we donate for higher end donators," Waxman added.

The KNSC is only one of the many local organizations that Homer Saw & Cycle donates to. "I get asked (for donations) an average of two times a week, and we try to give something to everyone," Waxman said. "We give more to certain organizations, like the ski club."

Waxman also volunteers at some of the KNSC events.

"Skiing is something a person can go as an individual or a group, from the time they are newborn to the last days of life (hopefully!)" she said. "It helps keep people active in the winter, while being able to stay close to home. It brings adventure, exercise, friendships, brings young and old together. It is a team sports for the schools, and enables adults to go from beginning skills to expert right here in Homer."

Ulmer's
Drug & Hardware

Ulmer's Chain Reaction Sports: Long history 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 Northwest 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 to find Soistman. 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 first buy boots, then poles, and last, the skis," he says. "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 has 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!"

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

AROUND EAGLE RIVER

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 second 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 Willliamson (1 K tour women). For more information on the foundation, visit erinkjohnson.com.

Thank you, Bob Stehn, for leading our club's trail work!

PHOTO BY **ROS SINGLETON**

PHOTO BY **ROS SINGLETON**

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.

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 fill, smooth out the trails, reduce 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.

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

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

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.

There were lots of smiles to go around during the March 3 tour of the Skarland Trail.

PHOTO BY **JOEL YOUNG**

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 Candlelight 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 remained nice, but the Chena River started melting too soon. As a result, the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot 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 Sonot also saw an attempted finish line kiss turn into a finish line crash (but with smiles), at least one skier going inexplicably off course, and a 30K finish by Alan Delamere, who has already passed his 80th birthday!

Incredible racing season

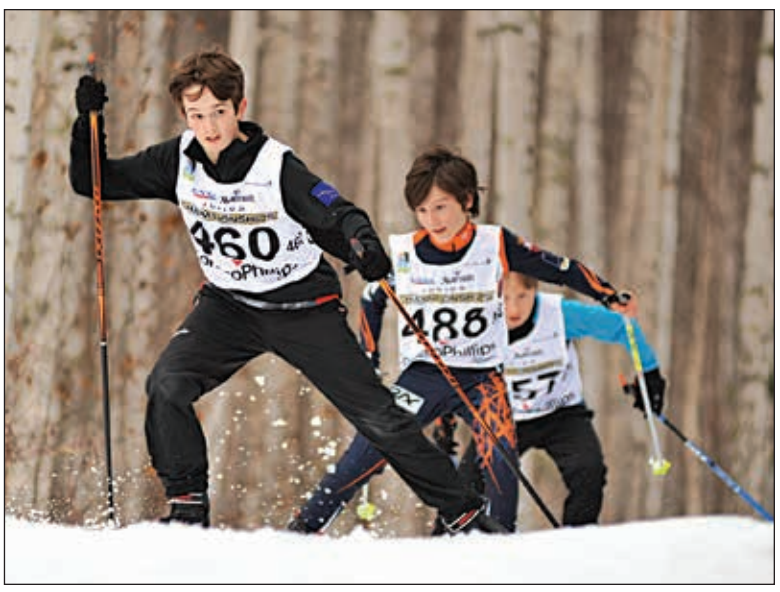
You can't really talk about this racing season without mentioning 16-year-old Kendall Kramer – a lot! Kramer, an FXC athlete, dominated locally, statewide, and nationally. She was even invited to the World Juniors, where she placed as high as fourth! She swept the U18 events at Junior Nationals and was invited to ski in the final World Cup races in Quebec, possibly being the youngest American Nordic skier ever at that level.

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

See **WRAPUP**, Page 16

PHOTOS BY **DARYN ESPINOSA**

Young skiers compete and have fun in the final day of the ConocoPhillips Interior Youth Festival in March at Birch Hill Recreation Area.



Who's Who in the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks

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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? What do you remember about first learning to ski?

My endeavor to cross-country ski started about the same time I became involved with the club, with my daughter in Junior Nordics and my wife coaching. I never had 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 heel 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 how I'm going to make it up and down a hill, not crash, and avoid killer squirrels, all while wondering if the outhouses work on the outhouse loop and trying to do the math calculations in my head converting kilometers to miles. Olivia on the other hand thinks of nothing! Why is that?

PHOTO COURTESY **DONALD WADE**

A happy skiing family! Donald with wife Shelly and daughter Olivia.

Fast-forward 5 years later. I finally figured out that the outhouses don't work on the outhouse loops, Tower loop has better cell reception, White Bear loop doesn't mean to ski to Canada and back, and Roller Coaster still means bent-pole loop. (And why there is a big red pad on the pole. Yes, I have hit it!). Now I can finally relate to what my daughter meant by "Nothing"!

I have been quite lucky to find the love of cross-country skiing. I still suck at it and come mostly in 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 dry 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.

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

I have been employed for 20+ years as a firefighter. Ten years ago I returned to school to advance my career at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and received my paramedic license. I currently work as a firefighter/paramedic and enjoy my work with the public. It has been a very rewarding career so far. Just as rewarding as having the best ski club that NSCF has provided for our family and the community with the commitment they provide.

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 (fxcski@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.

PHOTOS BY **CHEL ETHUN**

Attendees enjoy good food and socializing at the 2018 Spring Gala. And the dessert auction features some incredibly delicious dishes.

AROUND THE INTERIOR

Help wanted: Administration and Finance Coordinator

The Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks is accepting applications for our club's Administration and Finance Coordinator. Interested? Know someone who might be? Go to **nscfairbanks.org/2019/03/21/nscf-looking-for-club-administrator/**.

Help NSCF by shopping

Help the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks simply by shopping at Fred Meyer or Amazon. If you have a Fred Meyer Rewards Card you can link it to NSCF through the store's Community Rewards program. Fred Meyer makes donations to participating non-profits based on the spending of the customers linked to each 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 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.

PHOTO BY **JEROME JACKSON**

Chris Puchner: Diehard downhiller converts 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 way to get aerobic exercise in the winter. I also learned that 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.

Get out there
and earn your
hot cocoa.

If you're in Fairbanks for some spring skiing, ski hard and stay in comfort. At Wedgewood Resort, enjoy condo-style one- and two-bedroom suites with fully-equipped kitchens. All suites are surrounded by a 75-acre wildlife reserve with nature trails for cross-country skiing, next to the groomed trails at Creamer's Field and only 3 miles from Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center.

Welcome to your home away from home.

WEDGEWOOD
RESORT

Locally owned and operated in Fairbanks
FountainheadHotels.com/wedgewood-resort

Call 1-800-528-4916 for special nordic ski-centric rates!

- Ski waxing room
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Proud supporter of the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks.

WRAPUP

Continued from Page 13

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 Buetow Dental-Pangaea Health Distance Series, KINROSS/Fort Knox Town Race Series, the Wednesday Night Series, and the Skiathon, 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 Kkaazoot, 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 groomers 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!).

PHOTOS BY **JIM PASEK**

Biathletes compete in the Nenana Invitational in March at Birch Hill Recreation Area.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

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!

NSCF board busy overseeing club operations

BY ERIC TROYER

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

- Trying to solve the wonky Birch Hill weather station, which has been having erratic temperature drops.
- Determining how to support elite-level skiers from Fairbanks who need to raise funds for training and travel.
- Updating procedures and reporting protocol for accidents that happen as a part of NSCF programs and events.
- Overseeing paperwork and procedures for employees.

Also, thank you to Mark Winford, who is stepping down from the board. Right now, there are no new board members but the board is actively looking for interested people. If you have an interest in helping the NSCF continue to be a healthy ski club, please contact president@nscfairbanks.org.

SPONSORED

OFF THE TRAIL

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

BY ZUZANA ROGERS, PT, SCD, SCS, COMT
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 population.

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 strength train?

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 have to build strength to make your body more resilient! If you primarily run and bike during the summer, try to add 2 days of strength training per week.

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.

* This is too much wear!!

4 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, Achilles, and foot, while maximalist shoes (such as HOKAs) shift the load to the knees, hips, and low back. If your forefoot 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 mechanically 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!

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

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